

Oral History Interview with John S. Service

Political adviser to the Commander in Chief of American forces in the China-Burma-India Theater, 1943-45; executive officer to the political adviser to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in the Far East, 1945-46; First Secretary of the American Legation, Wellington, New Zealand, 1946-48.

Berkeley, California

[Sept 12](#) | [Sept 21](#) | [Sept 26](#) | [Oct. 8, 1977](#)

by the University of California Bancroft Library/Berkeley Regional Oral History Office (Rosemary Levenson interviewer)

Chapters [V](#), [VI](#), [VII](#), and [VIII](#)

[\[Notices and Restrictions\]](#) | [Interview Transcript](#) | [Additional John S. Service Chapters](#)

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Chapters V through VIII

[192]

CHAPTER V

V. TRAMPING AROUND NORTH CHINA, 1942

Building Chinese Contacts

LEVENSON: You told me that when you first arrived in Chungking, Drumright introduced you to his contacts. How did you go about building on these Communist contacts and making a variety of Chinese friends? I was surprised to read that you belonged to Rotary in Chungking and founded a Masonic group there.(Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 68.)

J. SERVICE: I didn't actually found it. No, that's a misnomer. There was quite an active Masonic group in China, almost all Western trained, educated in America primarily, businessmen, government people, and so on, who apparently liked the whole idea very much. It fitted in with their whole idea of clique, group, faction, secret societies and so on, but it was Western you see.

My father had been a Mason in Shanghai in a lodge where he was one of the very few foreigners. I eventually joined another Masonic network. All Masonic lodges are under a particular Grand Lodge. The lodge my father belonged to was under the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for some strange reason. Some Americans who were Masons in China long, long ago--decades back in the last century--wanted to start a lodge and they found they could affiliate with the Grand Lodge of the state of Massachusetts.

But later on most of these Chinese who started lodges affiliated with the Grand Lodge of the Philippines which was of course mostly American started.

[193]

J. SERVICE: You can't start a new lodge unless you get a charter. By the time of Pearl Harbor the Philippine Grand Lodge was closed up. This was one of the first things the Japanese did. So, there was no way for the Masons in Chungking to start a new lodge. They couldn't get a charter since the Grand Lodge was out of business.

So we had an informal group of Masons, who were Masons from various lodges in Shanghai, who met occasionally in Chungking. It was something that for a while was sort of fun. Later on I got too busy and drifted away from it.

Rotary was again mostly all Chinese. There were very few foreign businessmen in there. But it was a way of getting to know a lot of people.

I knew already or got to know the foreign newspaper people. There were some Chinese newspaper people that dealt with the foreigners a good deal, administrative information people. The Reuters man was Chinese. Of course, there were all the missionaries. A lot of them had known my parents. My parents lived in Chungking until 24.

Jack's Travels Begin: Irrigation Works in Szechwan

J. SERVICE: One thing leads to another, but I think it was through one of these missionary contacts that I got invited on a trip in the spring of 1942. The provincial government people were very much put in the shade by the national government people. When the national government moved into Szechwan, the Szechwan provincial people had to take a back seat.

There was a very active provincial commissioner of construction or public works man-- the Chinese always used reconstruction, but the Chinese phrase really means construction. His department had built several dams and irrigation works in central Szechwan, to try to improve production. Some of these were being opened up. He wanted to get a little bit of notice, a little bit of publicity, a little face.

But also we had some relief funds that we were distributing, not large. We had allotted funds for rebuilding after some of the bombings in Chungking, things like that. Actually one of the fine stairways going up to the city from the river bank had been built with these relief funds.

[194]

J. SERVICE: I think that this provincial commissioner of reconstruction may have had some idea of getting into American funds, making contact with an American dispenser of funds. An embassy person along would add luster to the group he was planning.

He was a very good friend of an old missionary named Rape, R-a-p-e. One of his sons went to college in the States, and he changed the name to Rappe, R-a-p-p-e. But I think he went to Rappe and asked Rappe if he knew any American in the embassy that would like to join the visit to these irrigation works. Gauss agreed, the embassy agreed, so I tootled off for about a ten day trip. They had a special bus. There were several newspaper people and assorted worthies. Rappe was along and I was there from the embassy.

There was a very pleasant correspondent from the Chinese Central News Agency, official government news agency. He and I became extremely close friends. There were a couple of other newspaper correspondents along too. It was a very genial and sort of a jolly trip. Rappe was a person who had a lot of fun and good humor in him and spoke perfect Szechwanese, absolutely Szechwanese. Most of our party were not Szechwanese, because most of the government people were from down river. The Central newsman was from Manchuria actually.

Buildup of U.S. Agencies in Chungking

[Interview 6: September 21, 1977]

J. SERVICE: During this period [1942] there was a buildup in Chungking of new U.S. agencies. Also, there was a parallel buildup in Washington of research organizations, research analysis intelligence, that just hadn't existed before. The State Department set up some sort of a research unit which I don't think they'd had before.

Very early an office was set up called COI--coordinator of information. Then the Army and the Navy--and OSS--set up their R&A branches. They were beginning to ask for information.

Eventually it got very confused because people in China felt they were too busy to be spending all their time sending in information. They were busy with current affairs. Eventually Washington created a "Joint Intelligence Collection Agency" which sent representatives to China to try to make sure that they got stuff.

[195]

J. SERVICE: In Washington there was competition for information and some people did not want to share their information with other people. But we'll hear more of this later on.

The coordinator of information was a predecessor of OSS. Their mandate was to collect publications and documents. It was under General [William J.] Donovan. The first man they sent out was a man named David Rowe, R-o-w-e. The coordinator of information was set up, like a lot of these very early agencies, directly under the White House. They didn't know quite where to put it in Washington. So, it was directly under the White House.

Rowe came out and got cards printed up in Chinese that he was the China representative of the pai kung, the "White House." This finished him as far as the American embassy, American ambassador, was concerned, because it appeared that he outranked the ambassador, you see! [laughter] David Rowe didn't last very long.

A similar development was American relief. There had been some American relief work before Pearl Harbor, not on a very large scale. But soon after Pearl Harbor and the war started, United China Relief, which had [Henry] Luce as one of its very important angels, started up.

One day in the embassy there I remember we had a visitor, a short, round fellow, quite cheerful, bustling, busy little type of fellow from New York named Albert Kohlberg.

LEVENSON: Uh-oh.

J. SERVICE: He was working for something called the American Bureau for Medical Aid to China, which was trying to get supplies for the China Red Cross. He had come to China to see what was happening to supplies they were sending. He'd been down to Kweiyang, the capital of Kweichow province in the south, which was a big supply depot for the Chinese. He found great quantities of their supplies just sitting in warehouses instead of getting out to the troops. He was very unhappy about it. He also found some information that there was leakage of these drugs and supplies to the black market.

So, Kohlberg in those days was very unhappy about what was happening in China and very friendly to the American embassy and quite pleasant to me in contrast to what happened many years later, of course.

[196]

Jack Tapped to Write State Department Report on Psychological Warfare and Morale in China

J. SERVICE: One example of this early increase in demands from Washington was an instruction we got from the Department. Sometime in the spring of '42, a very elaborate questionnaire wanting information on morale, psychological warfare and propaganda agencies in China. This was very perplexing. It was very un-State Department.

I found out later what happened was that a young professor at Johns Hopkins University-- Everyone in the academic field who had any sort of background on China was recruited into these various agencies. He was a young political science professor and thought that he might as well be a psychological warfare expert as anything else. After all, there weren't any psychological warfare experts in America!

He got a job in the War Department and had to start casting about for information. So, he thought immediately of having the embassy send in a long, elaborate report. I got tapped to do it. Any rate, it involved me in a lot of going around Chungking, talking to people, trying to pull together a lot of information. The Chinese were as disorganized as we were. The party was doing many things; the government was doing things; the army would do things in the propaganda and morale building fields.

LEVENSON: Did that stimulate your interest in what is now called content analysis, lead you to start looking at wall posters and so on?

J. SERVICE: Well, it certainly stirred my interest in wall posters and their content. I hadn't ever heard the term "content analysis," I think, till I came to Berkeley as a retired officer and went to the political science department. If you mentioned content analysis, I wouldn't have known what you meant. But yes, it started an interest in that sort of thing.

LEVENSON: What sources did you find most useful?

J. SERVICE: It was just a matter really of talking to everyone that you could think of that knew something about the field. I talked to a good many Chinese, but a lot of them weren't terribly helpful. My newspaper people, both foreign and Chinese, were helpful, people like Mac [F. MacCracken] Fisher.

There were several people there who had been in China a good many years working for the news services. The Associated Press and the UP had people that were quite well established

[197]

J. SERVICE: in China, had been there a long time, and had a long contact with, the Chinese Ministry of Information, that sort of thing. They were helpful. I talked to Chinese in these various departments.

There wasn't very much published stuff. But, it was a matter of pulling together the data. You can't be too precise sometimes. You have to convey a general understanding of what things are like.

LEVENSON: I find I'm a little unclear as to whom psychological warfare would be directed in the Chinese situation. It's clear enough in Europe.

J. SERVICE: There wasn't very much. They'd tried to use some of their prisoners. They tried to prepare some propaganda material. There were attempts early in the war to drop leaflets on Taiwan. They didn't have any planes that could reach Japan, and there really wasn't much directed at the Japanese. This was one of the things that you found out.

One thing that interested me was this professor--who later on I got to know--why he was so interested in Chinese psychological warfare. Theoretically he was interested in psych warfare against the Japanese. I suppose his rationale was that he had to find out what the Chinese were doing in psychological warfare against the Japanese, but most of the questionnaire was about propaganda directed toward Chinese. Of course, he was a Chinese scholar and all this was useful material for him in his professional business. Is that all?

LEVENSON: I think so. The only place I can see for psychological warfare would be in Japanese occupied areas of China.

J. SERVICE: I finally finished the report in July. It was a long thing. I got a good commendation on it. It gave me an interest in this subject, which later on led to other reports which are in Esherick's book.

Chungking: A Kuomintang Cocoon

LEVENSON: You said that you were in a cocoon. How restrictive were the KMT [Kuomintang] provisions on travel?

J. SERVICE: You couldn't travel anyplace without some sort of permission. This was not very easy to get particularly if you were traveling toward war areas or in the war areas.

[198]

J. SERVICE: The newspapers were heavily censored, and it was very hard to get out-of-town papers from other cities. It would take a long time to get them. But by-and-large they didn't have very much news in them. Certainly any war news was heavily censored. The Chinese Ministry of Information and a Central News Agency put out a lot of material in English. It was obviously what they wanted out, what they were willing to have out. It didn't present any gloomy side of things.

There was a lot of gossiping and talking around. Your contacts with Chinese generally were limited to social contacts, dinners. That's not always the best time to talk. Chinese don't have the habit of cocktail parties, so that if you go it's usually to a formal, sit-down dinner. As I say, we were fairly well cut off from that because of our location. We went to some things in the city at night but not very often. We tried to avoid them.

We saw our opposite numbers in the other embassies and if anybody got any news it got around. Everyone was sort of reporting the same thing. You see the same thing with Peking today. I'm sure the embassies are all talking to each other and everyone is reporting pretty much the same thing.

Relations With Germans and Italians

LEVENSON: What were your relations with Germans and Italians in Chungking?

J. SERVICE: We were neutral when I first got to Chungking. Our relations with the Germans and Italians were fairly friendly. There were so few people they could be friendly with [laughter] they were perhaps more friendly with us.

The Germans had two men and it was very interesting. One was a man who had been interned, I think, in England during the First World War, and I think actually studied at either Oxford or Cambridge. He could pass for an Englishman. Career diplomat with many years in the diplomatic service. The other fellow was a younger, obviously Nazi type.

The night of June 22, 1941, they were coming over to one of the houses where some of our people lived for a bridge game. I was also invited. They arrived and the "Englishman" was absolutely distraught. He said, "This is the end. Hitler's made the incredible error of starting war on two fronts, attacking the Soviet Union."

[199]

J. SERVICE: I never found out what happened to the other one because very soon after that the Germans recognized the Wang Ching-wei government in Nanking. So our German friends had to leave. At the same time the Italians also recognized the Wang Ching-wei government and left. From Yunnan they went into Thailand, I think, and were in Thailand for some time.

The Italian, oddly enough, came out of it all very well. He stayed loyal to Mussolini and Mussolini's government. But later on he had a very good job at the United Nations. Italians are very, very much split up about the treatment that some of the pro-Fascist and Fascist diplomats got. Apparently they were not very much discriminated against, shall we say, in the postwar period.

A Turning Point: Genesis of Jack as Outside Man: Journey to Kansu

J. SERVICE: When I got rid of the psychological warfare report, a chance had come to make this trip to the northwest provinces. I left on that in July--I'm not sure just when-- ostensibly to attend a China Society of Engineers conference in Lanchow province, in Kansu. But, also the party was going up to Tsinghai province and to the oil wells up in the Kansu Corridor, a newly developed oil field.

I was with a party of about twenty government engineers working for some of the government

departments, mainly the Ministry of Resources, some engineering professors in Chinese universities. There were three Chinese newspaper people and myself. I was the only foreigner.

We had a bus assigned to us as far as Lanchow. After that we traveled by truck. But, it was a very, very pleasant experience, and in a sense it's probably a turning point, a watershed.

LEVENSON: In what sense?

J. SERVICE: In a sense that I didn't realize of course at the time, but from this time on I was to be very much a sort of a traveling man, an outdoors, or outside man, instead of an inside or office man. This led into my becoming pretty much an independent operator, independent reporter, partly because I was traveling, but this led to various other things.

[200]

J. SERVICE: A friend of mine, Han Ming was his name, was apparently very close to the Minister of Economics, Wang Weng-hao. The ministry was really resources and development, more than economics in our sense.

I think Han Ming suggested that I be included. Wang Weng-hao, with the idea of getting someone from the embassy involved, approved. The embassy was delighted--a very fine chance.

Growth of Chinese Friendships: Filling a Long Felt Need

J. SERVICE: I was thirty- two when we started, thirty-three soon after we were on the road. The newspaper people were about my age. Some of these professors were a little bit older, but it was a fairly young group. We got to be very congenial. We got to know each other very well. My allowance was fifteen kilos, and I stuck to it. Everyone else was on the same basis. In the nights when we'd stop at an inn, why we'd all sleep lined up on the k'ang [brick sleeping platform heated by flue from kitchen stove] like sardines in a can more or less.

For the first time I was being completely accepted as a friend by Chinese on a very intimate basis. I think that this was something that probably I had, in an unconscious way, missed a great deal in my youth. My parents were devoted to China, were obviously very much interested in China and Chinese culture. My mother's poems and so on, which you haven't seen, indicate something of this attachment for China. But because of the question of sanitation, hygiene, and the fact that we lived on an entirely different plane, I really had no close contact with Chinese.

I've mentioned before I grew up having no Chinese playmates. I knew no Chinese. Then in my experience as an adult in China I had not really known any Chinese, on a very intimate basis, who were really Chinese. In Yunnanfu we got drawn into that small, compact foreign community. We met a few Chinese who were officials, but on a very sort of arm's length, official basis. We had a few returned students that had studied in America, who were teaching or something. But this was not any close association.

In Peking we met our teachers. My language teachers were men of an older generation-- long gowns, old fashioned! One of them had taken the examinations in the old imperial days. They were very much scholars of the old type. We met a few university people like Hu Shih or Dr. Chiang Monlin.

Then we met a few officials.

[201]

J. SERVICE: The Chinese young people we met in Peking were attached to the foreign community and trying to be "foreign." The same in Shanghai. The only Chinese one met in Shanghai were Western educated--either abroad or in foreign-run schools in China. They were aping the foreigners, going to the night clubs in Shanghai, the Western social life.

It wasn't really until I got into this milieu, this full time immersion on a long trip that I was completely on a par and accepted by Chinese, sharing their intimacies and their own ideas. These were down-river people--almost all the government people were from the down-river provinces who were exploring new country. They were as excited about this trip as anybody could be. It was all new country to them.

LEVENSON: When you say down-river, you mean Peking, Nanking?

J. SERVICE: Yes, all the coastal provinces. Han Ming actually was from Manchuria, but most of the rest of them were from along the Yangtze. One of them was from Hangkow for instance. But, they were from Treaty Ports and Shanghai and Peking.

It was tremendously exciting to them to be making this trip from Chengtu up to Lanchow and up to the northwest. China has got a two-thousand-year history, and these were people who were educated, college graduates, some of them engineers--there were several Western educated--but they'd never seen--They'd read all about these things, you see. To go along and realize that this town here, that little walled city, was a famous place mentioned in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*! We saw the towns where all sorts of things happened in Chinese history.

We crossed over from the valley of the Kialing into the valley of the Han River, the headwaters of the Han. The Han River comes down at Hangkow. But, there's a narrow gorge and you could see the square holes in the cliff where a famous general during the Three Kingdoms [A.D. 221-265] period had built a road by driving posts into the cliff side and then laying planks along it.

The whole history of the country we went through was very exciting to these people. Along the road, the trees had been planted by Tso Tsung-t'ang's army when he went up in the 1860s or 70s to repacify Sinkiang and put down Mohammedan rebellion.

The cliffs along the way in China, particularly along a famous road like this, have inscriptions of characters. The temples have got tablets--they were built by such and such a person.

[202]

J. SERVICE: These were young Chinese who were modern in every sense, but not aping the West. They were nationalistic. They were for the war against Japan, of course. It was a very stimulating and exciting experience for them as well as for me.

LEVENSON: What was their political orientation?

J. SERVICE: Oh well, they were all critical of the Kuomintang. The intellectuals were almost unanimously critical of the Kuomintang. You had a variation among these people, of course, as to how outspoken they would be and how much they felt the Kuomintang should be blamed. Some people felt, well, you know, after all, there's a war on and there are a lot of difficulties. There were some people who would be government apologists.

But no one tried to cover up the facts. The facts were just so plain. We saw recruits on the road. We saw Szechwan recruits being marched over the mountains to Shensi province--you had to get your recruit away from his native province so he couldn't run away so easily--dying beside the road, starvation. There were all sorts of things. No one made any attempt to apologize or ignore the shortcomings.

There were differences of opinion. Some of them just weren't much interested in politics. The newspaper people, of course, were very politically interested and politically aware.

We had one American Chinese on the trip. Quite a few Chinese-Americans went back to China during the war for what they saw as their patriotic duty to help the fatherland. He was teaching in a university near Chungking.

He was very amusing because he was very much alarmed, as I had been once, about sanitation. He had to be assured everything was boiled and so on. They laughed and made a lot of fun of him. I was called the Chinese American. He was the American Chinese, [laughter] Well, anyway.

Values of Missionary Contacts

J. SERVICE: Along the way, of course, I made a point, every chance I had, every town we stopped at, of going to see the missionary. If there was a missionary in town--I could find out very easily and having usually a chat with them. I didn't try to stay with them. I stayed with my own gang.

[203]

J. SERVICE: Missionaries, of course, were glad to see anybody. They were isolated much, more than normal. Travel was difficult. A lot of them had not been able to take home leaves on schedule because of the war. They were all anxious for news, anxious to talk to somebody from the outside. In a way, I was from the metropolis, coming from Chung-king. And, they all knew who I was or knew my family, knew my parents.

I would simply pick their brains as much as I could, as much as was decent and they were willing, on strictly local conditions. I didn't try to get them onto what might be embarrassing political subjects, what they thought of the government. There was a lot you could ask just on purely local matters, which they were very often thoroughly informed about, through their own church members.

LEVENSON: We talked about this a long time ago. I think you said at first you found these people, many of whom were politically quite unaware, that their mission in life was a missionary one, and they were not politically interested, and that bit by bit you sharpened your techniques of asking questions.

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. Yes. I'd forgotten we had this on the record.

LEVENSON: No, we didn't. This was several years ago.

J. SERVICE: Yes, it's quite true. As time went on I certainly became a little more effective perhaps, a little more delicate perhaps, about it. Also, I learned more questions to ask, things that they would know.

They very often had quite thorough details about the taxation picture. Various Kuomintang officials made private estimates that between a third and a fourth of what was actually collected from the people reached the government. These people knew from their own church members a lot of what went on, bribes, entertainment, efforts made to get your land classified in lower categories so your tax rate would be lower.

And conscription. They had had experience with their own people. When I got in a place like Sian where they had large schools, they knew a good deal about secret police activity against the students, political repression, thought reform camps, or schools.

But I didn't usually ask people what they thought about the government. I just asked what was happening locally, what did they know about this and that. What was the current price of a recruit? Was land being abandoned? How about refugees?

[204]

J. SERVICE: I also had ready access to the YMCA people through my father's contacts. In those days, the YMCA was almost completely run by Chinese. The secretaries were Chinese. There were a very few foreigners who served on the national committee in Shanghai.

Then another group that was active in the northwest and practically all over China was the Friends Ambulance Unit. These were conscientious objectors, first from the U.K. and later they had some Americans. They couldn't drive ambulances in China because Chinese just don't let any foreigners get near the battle. There are no roads anyway usually for the ambulance.

So, what they did was to transport relief supplies from abroad on highways in China. They had depots in various places. They were another group that I got tied into.

LEVENSON: I imagine they had fairly good intelligence because they traveled.

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. They traveled, sure, and they were bright. Michael Sullivan down here at Stanford was one of them, you know. Rhoads Murphey was one of them, who's now at Michigan. There were all sorts of young chaps. There was a fellow Mel Kennedy who teaches at Bryn Mawr.

The INDUSCO Network

J. SERVICE: Then I also stopped in a place, Shuangshihpu, south of Sian, across the Ch'ingling Mountains in southern Shensi where the [Chinese] Industrial Cooperatives, INDUSCO, had a base. Rewi Alley made his headquarters there, and was running a school. I'd never known Rewi before, but I knew Ed Snow who was a very close friend. Rewi at first was standoffish but later on we became very good friends.

Through people like Rewi Alley and through getting acquainted with the INDUSCO people I sort of clued into a whole other network.

LEVENSON: Could you expand a little on Rewi Alley's role. I know he still lives in China.

J. SERVICE: Rewi went to China about 1926 from New Zealand and got a job as a factory inspector with the Municipal Council in Shanghai.

[205]

J. SERVICE: When the Sino- Japanese war started in '37 a great number of refugees from the coast moved inland with the government. Rewi, the Ed Snows, and several other friends got the idea that industrial, producers' cooperatives could give work to these people, and help the war effort.

At first the Chinese government was quite helpful and friendly and advanced loans and credit. But, as the United Front weakened in China and the political repression became greater, they became more and more suspicious of the co-op people. They were liberal, they were toward the left, and they were devoted people who were willing to work for almost nothing.

Anybody that was willing to work for starvation wages obviously was suspect in the corrupt atmosphere of the Kuomintang. No "normal" person could be willing to work for nothing. He had to be sort of a Communist. So, toward the end of the war, they ran into a lot of political trouble, a lot of their people were arrested.

How "Gung Ho" Came Into the Language

J. SERVICE: Incidentally "gung ho" which has come into the American language, was a sort of slogan, as a short form for the industrial cooperatives. It was the Chung Kuo (China) Kung-yeh (industrial) Ho-tso-she (cooperative societies). In the Chinese way of making acronyms you took the "Kung" from the industrial and a "ho" from ho-tso-she. So, you got the word Kungho which became the industrial cooperative slogan. One could say it meant "work together."

Then an American Marine officer, Evans Carlson, came out to China, or was in China, and got a chance to travel up to Yen-an in the early days--in '38 I think, and again in '39-- and he was much impressed with the cooperatives and became a great promoter. He adopted this slang "Kungho" which then he used as a sort of war cry for his raiders when he was the leader of the raider regiment that was in the South Pacific during the war. That's how it came into the American language!

[206]

Chinese Engineers' Conference, Lanchow: Jack Drives the Truck to Sining

J. SERVICE: At the engineers' conference I was the object of much curiosity, being the only foreigner there.

LEVENSON: What would people want to know about you?

J. SERVICE: Oh, "Good God, who is he?" It was very surprising to Chinese to see someone who

spoke Chinese as well as I did and who was simply willing or able to live completely Chinese. I'd be eating with my friends in a restaurant. People would come in the restaurant and just stand and stare at me, they were so surprised.

But anyway, the conference was over and we went off first on a trip to Tsinghai province, which is more or less due west of Lanchow.

They had some heavy rains. The road was through loess country, which is wind deposited dust--very fine dust. The hills are just made of this. It's a deposit hundreds of feet deep. It was very hard to get rock in that country. You could find some in the river beds, but they hadn't put much rock on the road, so the road was very badly washed out.

The driver decided the bus couldn't make it. We had a truck that had been used on the Burma Road. It was an International five-ton truck, considered a big truck in China. We'd had an awful time with washouts and uncertainty whether we'd get through or not.

The truck driver said he had a recurrence of malaria which he'd contracted on the Burma Road. He may well have been sick. So, we were stranded on this highway, no towns. I said I could drive. Some of the engineers had studied abroad. They could tell you all about automotive engines. But no Chinese in those days, except a trained chauffeur-driver, could drive a car.

They said, "Oh, you can't drive this truck. It's a very big truck. It's difficult." It had five speeds forward and a dual ratio, so you had another five speeds. I said, "Never mind. I used to drive a truck during summer vacations in college." I'd been watching the truck driver, so I knew pretty well what to do.

[207]

J. SERVICE: So at any rate, I drove the truck from then on, to everybody's amusement. Just outside the gates of Sining, the capital of Tsinghai, [laughing] the truck driver decided that he was well enough to drive into town.

On the Old Silk Road

J. SERVICE: From Sining we took a trip down to a very large and famous lamasery-- which was a seat as I recall of the second ranking lama, the Panchen Lama, called Kumbum, very large and magnificent. Some of the main buildings had gold roofs, gilded roofs. We had a day there. An interesting experience.

Then while the engineers spent a couple of days in Sining, I hired a cart--north China cart -- a Mongolian horse and so on--and went west to a town called Hwangyuan. There was a missionary family out there in Hwangyuan. I couldn't get as far as the Lake Koko Nor which means clear, or blue, lake. Anyway, I spent a day with these missionaries and came back.

We drove back almost all the way to Lanchow, and then we took the trip north on the old main road, the Kansu Corridor, which was again a very fascinating trip. The country is like the Southwest. It could be like Arizona or New Mexico perhaps. You're paralleling a range of very high mountains, with snow even in the summer. The rivers come down from the mountains and then just disappear

into the Gobi Desert.

This is the famous "Silk Road" the old road up to Sinkiang. It dates back to the Han dynasty or before. Wherever it crosses the streams or rivers there's a little town, a garrison town in the old days.

What remains of the Great Wall is to your right out toward the Gobi, to protect the oases and the towns from the nomads, from the people coming in from the desert. There's not much left of the Great Wall now. It's packed earth. But there are still ruined watch towers. You can poke around in the ruins and find arrowheads and porcelain shards and things like that.

The cities, the towns, were half abandoned. They were important towns when they had military garrisons there. But now they were dilapidated, almost ghost towns.

[208]

The Only Functioning Chinese Oil Field

J. SERVICE: The [Chinese] government at that time was planning to ask the United States government to fly in an oil refinery. It would have to be broken down into small segments, and flown from India to Tibet, up to the Kansu Corridor.

LEVENSON: Over the Hump?

J. SERVICE: Not over the Hump. Well it might have come in over the Hump, but they expected to take it in a much more direct line north from India instead of east from India. The Hump from India was east into Yunnan.

LEVENSON: Right.

J. SERVICE: The transport problem required a refinery that could be broken down into small pieces; it would also require a lot of high-quality steels that were scarce under war conditions.

We got up to the oil fields. They were very cautious about security there. They took away my Leica camera. They took us around the wells, the oil fields. They had a very primitive, small refinery.

They didn't produce lubricating oils. They just distilled out the primary products, kerosene and some gasoline, a very low octane gasoline. It was a very simple distillation process.

I counted paces between the wells. I could produce a pretty good map when I finished, you know, without having a camera. It was on an alluvial fan. You see many of them in Death Valley or in the West, where a stream comes out of high mountains and then there's a very gradually sloping fan or apron of rocks and boulders.

Our party, twenty or so people, were put in a schoolhouse. They'd built a schoolhouse at the lower end of the settlement. The wells were at the top. They had no place to put the oil, so they had just scooped out shallow reservoirs and put the earth around the downhill side. American farmers do it with a bulldozer to make ponds. They were very simple holding basins for oil.

They had brought in a lot of workers, just common laborers. Of course, they had engineers, but they needed a lot of common labor. Wood was very scarce. There were no trees except way

[209]

J. SERVICE: high up in the mountains, hard to get at. So, most of the workmen had just dug themselves huts in the ground, dug into the ground, and then got willows and so on and made a roof over it.

Fire!

J. SERVICE: One of the nights we were there we hadn't been there very long--second or third night, there was a downpour of rain, just an absolute downpour of rain, sort of a cloud burst. In the evening we were all back in our quarters. Suddenly, there was a great alarm, shouting, noise.

We all went out of the door, and we could see a fire, a big fire going on. I was anxious to see more! Just back of our place was a hill. We were right at the foot of a hill. I was better clothed in some ways than most of the other people. Anyway, I rushed up the hill and could see the oil fire blazing up.

As I was watching it--a tremendous uproar--An oil fire is a very, you know--I think I'm overusing "exciting"--scary sort of thing. But, watching it I realized--I did a sort of a double take. There was a ditch. A drainage ditch had been dug along the foot of the hill, where the fan came against the steep hill. This ditch emptied right at the playground in the middle of which our school was standing. The ditch just ended there. It hadn't been continued down. I suddenly realized that this fire was coming down the ditch. Then I realized that it was going to reach our playground which was already covered with water.

So, I charged down into the building, the one room schoolhouse, and shouted, "Save your lives! Save your lives! Get out!" We had bunks there, board bunks. My sleeping roll was spread out. I just threw my clothes into this, bundled it up in my arms and rushed out! Everybody thought I was crazy. But, they quickly decided to do the same thing. Some of them had to run through flames to get out. By the time the last few got out, the fire had reached our playground. The place just went up like a matchbox.

LEVENSON: You saved the lives of the gang?

J. SERVICE: We all got out. My own problem was that I only had two pair of shoes, and I forgot that my heavy pair of shoes [laughing] were on the floor under this bunk. So, from then on I had only one pair of shoes. My spare pair of shoes was incinerated.

[210]

J. SERVICE: But at any rate, we got up on the hill and huddled there in the rain, clutching our few possessions, our sleeping rolls and so on. Things calmed down. The fire burned itself out.

What had happened was that the retaining walls around the lower side of one of the oil pools just gave way. The oil then started running downhill, and into the lowest places which were the homes of the workers, who were sitting huddled around their little cooking fires, in the center of their earth hut

or yurt. That caught the oil on fire.

The oil wells didn't burn up. They were up higher. It didn't get up to them. Most of the town itself, the main buildings, were not burned because an alluvial fan is higher in the center. So, the oil flowed off to the side and hit the ditch. The buildings and the refinery were mostly in the center and they weren't hit. There weren't many buildings burned except the one where we were staying, which of course was very embarrassing. We spent the rest of the night on wet blankets in one of the office buildings. Well anyway, that's enough of that.

Jack Recommends Against Flying in a Refinery

LEVENSON: How did they get their products out?

J. SERVICE: It had to be taken out by truck. But, it was a very long haul. This was one of the reasons why I recommended against our putting a lot of money into this business of flying in a refinery, because--I forget the exact mileage-- but from there to Chungking was something like twelve hundred miles by road, atrocious roads, worse than the Burma Road if possible. So that a truck had to carry enough gasoline for the round trip, and there wasn't much capacity left over. And Chungking was still a long ways from the fighting zones. Most of the fighting then was done in Kwangsi, and in the southwest. So that it wasn't a very practical proposition.

The oil drums in China were old, and a drum gets old quickly because every trip means continual jolting. It leaks more and more, so you were always troubled by leaking oil drums. We would have had to fly in drums. The Chinese didn't have enough steel. They couldn't make the drums. It was just not a very feasible proposition.

[211]

J. SERVICE: From the oil wells the Chinese agreed to let the party (I was not the initiator--the engineers and the other Chinese asked and I was pleased)--go on further up the corridor to Tunhuang. These are the famous old T'ang dynasty cave temples up at the extreme end of the corridor.

This was a very pleasant trip. We went to the town of Tunhuang. Then the temples are about, oh, ten or fifteen miles out from the town. But this is desert country and terribly, terribly hot. The town of Tunhuang--you've probably seen pictures of Sinkiang--the streets in the summertime are covered with rushes, with arbors above to give you some shade.

We had to leave our truck in Tunhuang. It's sandy desert. Then just at sunset we took off and went in the evening, by moonlight, across this desert to the cliff with the caves. We arrived about eleven or twelve o'clock. Beautiful--that was almost dreamlike.

LEVENSON:: Was that limestone?

J. SERVICE: No, it's actually a fine buff-colored sandstone. The carvings are well preserved but most are inside so somewhat protected. And it is the murals that are best. [musing] Well anyway, that's all very fine and very exciting.

LEVENSON: Did you take your typewriter with you?

J. SERVICE: No, no. That's one trouble. I did very little reporting on this whole trip. I hadn't gotten the great urge to report. But, I couldn't take a typewriter. I was limited. I was absorbing and listening and talking, but the only reports that really came out of this were when I got back to Chungking--and I'll talk about that later--a report on the oil wells, because that was a report that was wanted, and a report on the Honan famine which we'll come to.

Jack's Message to Chungking Does Not Get Through: Private Code Breaks Down

J. SERVICE: There was one interesting experience, though, on this trip. We were in the Kansu Corridor, well up the corridor and in one of the towns. We found out that Mme. Chiang and a bunch of--I think maybe T.V. Soong--but anyway an important official party was flying through, going to Sinkiang.

[212]

J. SERVICE: What had happened was that the governor of Sinkiang, Sheng Shih-ts'ai, was a Manchurian who had gotten--I don't know how, anyway, it doesn't matter now-- but he had gotten from Manchuria to Sinkiang, apparently with Russian help or connivance, and had taken over Sinkiang and had ruled it very much under the Russian thumb. He was very pro-Russian, allowed Russians to come in and develop and so on.

For a long time Sinkiang had been really a closed province that had no relation to, no connection with the national government. Foreigners could not travel there. The few people that did try were imprisoned and so on. A very tough regime and very much of a closed preserve

Anyway, I heard through my Chinese companions that this plane was flying through with the party up to Sinkiang. After the Russian-German war started, Sheng apparently thought that the Russians were going down the drain, as a lot of other people did, and also they could no longer give him supplies and support, or were not willing to.

Hence he decided to turn over, become loyal and friendly to the Chungking regime. This was a party that was going up to do the preliminary negotiations. Well, I was quite excited about this because I didn't know whether the people in Chungking would know about this or not. I thought that this would be something that might have been secret even from foreign embassies in Chungking.

I had a code that I had worked out with the code room staff in Chungking, a private code I could carry in my head. So, I charged off to the telegraph office, [laughing] sent off a telegram to the embassy saying that Mme. Chiang and various other people were going through in this plane to Sinkiang.

They never coded the telegram because--well, the cipher ran words together, you see, so that my Chinese names, being run together, looked like gibberish to the code clerk. If they had gotten someone who could read the Chinese and have separated the Chinese names, unscrambled them, they would have been able to make sense out of it. Anyway, they never got the message. But, they knew about it. It was not as secret in Chungking as I had expected.

LEVENSON: Why wasn't the code clerk competent enough to sort out names like Chiang and Soong?

J. SERVICE: I forget now what the names were, but Chinese names are polysyllabic. If you take a name like Chu Chao-liang, which was probably one of the names, and you write it all together, it can look very confusing.

[213]

J. SERVICE: If I had Mme. Chiang or something like that--I probably did--she would recognize that, but the Chu Shiao-liang or these other names he just thought I'd gotten the thing all scrambled.

LEVENSON: What did the embassy expect you to do on this trip?

J. SERVICE: It was simply a chance for observation in an interesting and unvisited part of the country.

We drove back to Lanchow. We stayed for some time. Most of the engineers left. I think the newspaper people stayed on for a while and then they left. I stayed on. I'm not quite sure why I stayed on, but I had decided by this time to go from Lanchow to Sian, the capital of Shensi province, by bus.

Wendell Willkie's One-World Trip: Jack Welcomes Him to China

J. SERVICE: Anyway, I was in Lanchow when word came that [Wendell] Willkie was coming through, Willkie on his great one-world journey. He had visited the Soviet Union and was coming from the Soviet Union down into China. His plane would stop overnight in Lanchow.

So, I thought, "Well I'm here, I'll certainly be expected by the embassy to welcome him to China." The local Chinese were quite excited and I was called in to help with the translations, prepare the slogans. They had banners across the streets, and they wanted them in English of course. So I helped to make sure the English was correct. The Y secretary, because he knew English, had been called in by the provincial government people. I helped him out.

I went out to the airport to meet Willkie and welcomed him to China--he looked a bit confused and startled--I welcomed him to China on behalf of the embassy and then looked over his shoulder and saw the naval attaché who had flown to Sinkiang to meet him in Urumchi! The embassy, of course, had not told me anything about this. So, I was looking sort of foolish. [laughter]

[214]

J. SERVICE: There was a big dinner given by the governor of Kansu province for Willkie that night and I was not included, an obvious snub which perplexed the Chinese in Lanchow. It was Hollington Tong's doing.

Then Hollington Tong was the Chinese minister of information which in Kuomintang China was a party job, not a government job. He had also gone to Urumchi. Hollington Tong was the Generalissimo's favorite interpreter.

The usual Chinese strategy was to try to isolate these visitors from as much local American contact as possible. This was a standard practice, but Tong used the excuse that Willkie had said that he preferred not to spend all his time with American officials. Anyway he got me taken off the guest list.

This was pretty typical of Chinese tactics with the Luces, and important newspaper people, and foreign visitors, to try to smother them with hospitality and to try to limit as much as possible their chances of talking to local Americans. I talked to some of the people with Willkie, but I didn't have much chance to talk to Willkie. He wasn't much interested anyway.

Bus Trip to Sian: The Kuomintang's Permeable Blockade

J. SERVICE: The bus trip to Sian was interesting because it was through the blockade zone. At that time there was a very heavy Kuomintang military blockade of the Communist border region area where Yen'an was located. One of the reasons I wanted to take the trip was that we passed through this area.

LEVENSON: Was the blockade efficiently run?

J. SERVICE: Oh no, not really. There was a good deal of going back and forth. There were refugees on the road at this time. There was a major famine going on in Honan, and people were coming west from Honan into Shensi. Even up this far north you saw refugees on the road going west.

I asked some of the missionaries about what they knew about conditions. They didn't know anything very much, except that there were more people going in to the Communist areas than coming out. So the presumption was that things were pretty good if people were going in. The missionaries had no contact, but they said there was trade back and forth, some smuggling and so on going on.

[215]

J. SERVICE: There was one interesting episode about this bus ride. Lanchow was very much a secret police town. Surveillance of all foreigners was very noticeable, very obnoxious. I had had a tail when I was in Lanchow that I got to know quite well. When I got to my bus in Lanchow to go to Sian it turned out that he was on the bus, but he was under detention, wearing manacles. He'd been arrested [laughing] for something. He was extremely embarrassed about this. He was in some trouble of some sort, being taken down to headquarters in Sian apparently.

LEVENSON: What was the surveillance? What were they looking for?

J. SERVICE: Just tailing you, watching.

LEVENSON: Contacts?

J. SERVICE: I'm sure that letters and mail and baggage were searched--I didn't really mind. But I was doing no reporting and had no documents or files. I assumed that I would be searched.

One day on the bus, we saw people beside the road searching and looking beside the road. We stopped to find out what was going on. They were passengers who had been on a bus the day before that had been robbed. This was a heavily militarized zone, but the bus had been robbed. They were merchants and had thrown some of their money out of the bus into the weeds. They were trying to see if they could find their valuables!

I got to Sian and it again was a heavily secret police place. I stayed in a China Travel Service hostel,

talked to a lot of the missionaries. They had had a lot of experience there--because they had large schools, middle schools--with secret police surveillance of their students, midnight or early morning raids into the dormitories, taking off students.

By this time I had heard a good deal about the famine in Honan province, which was the next province to the east. So, I decided to go there. But, while I was waiting to take my trip, Willkie arrived in Sian. He had been down in Chungking. Then, he wanted to see a war zone.

The favorite place to take people to see the war at that time was near Sian where the Yellow River makes a bend at Tungkuan and the Japanese were on the north bank and the Chinese were on the south bank. They exchanged sporadic artillery fire.

It was a simple and convenient place to take somebody. With binoculars you could look and see Japanese on the other side of the Yellow River.

[216]

J. SERVICE: Again there was a big parade for Willkie, and I was out on the street all morning with the crowds watching the preparations and listening to people complaining about how they had been ordered out and mustered by the paochia organization.

I was treated better in Sian, and was included in the guest list for the dinner that was given by the local government for Willkie .

Chinese Interpreters Distort Willkie's Speeches

J. SERVICE: Willkie gave a speech. We Americans never had, we never used our own interpreters. So, Hollington Tong did the interpreting. It was interesting to see the distortion of what Willkie was saying.

Willkie was trying to talk about [raises voice to paraphrase Willkie], "He'd looked into the eyes of the common man of China and he realized what Chinese aspirations were, what the common man of China wanted." All this was changed in Hollington Tong's translation into Chinese. All the talk about the common man became only China. It was on an entirely different level. My Chinese YMCA friends and others asked afterwards whether or not I had noticed what had been done.

LEVENSON: Was there any way of getting around this?

J. SERVICE: We should have done what the Russians did. The Russians would never use a Chinese interpreter. The Russians always had their own. We never trained any interpreters. My Chinese wasn't really good enough to do it. I can interpret conversations but a speech where you've got to have it right at the tip of your tongue, simultaneous speech, is very tough. But, we should have had people who could do it. For somebody like Willkie we should have had an interpreter. When Gauss gave a talk we should have had one of our own people there, but we've always complacently used Chinese.

Nixon did the same thing. Nixon and Kissinger, they didn't want to use State Department interpreters. Kissinger and Nixon would not allow them to play any role except when Rogers (William Pierce Rogers. Secretary of State 1969-1973.) talked. But, when Nixon and Kissinger had their talks with

the Chinese, they used a Chinese interpreter.

[217]

LEVENSON: Why?

J. SERVICE: Because they didn't want the State Department to know what they were saying. They didn't trust the State Department.

A Catholic Bishop's Links with Tai Li and Secret Police

J. SERVICE: Loyang was an interesting chance to talk to missionaries, particularly a Catholic bishop, Bishop Megan, who was very outspoken about human and government causes for the famine, the mistreatment of the peasants.

But, at the same time it was interesting that he was using his parish priests, Chinese and foreign, scattered through the occupied areas as an informational intelligence network, for Tai Li. He was cooperating very closely with Tai Li.

LEVENSON: I wanted to ask a little--You used the term "secret police" and you introduced the name Tai Li. I've seen in various places the term "Gestapo" applied to the Kuomintang secret police. How valid, in your opinion, are the connotations of "Gestapo" to what was going on in China at this time under Tai Li and the Kuomintang?

J. SERVICE: There were some parallels but probably not very close. There were several secret police organizations in China. The party had one which was under the "C-C Clique," the Ch'en brothers, Ch'en Li-fu and Ch'en Kuo-fu. Then Tai Li was independent, more or less directly under the Generalissimo. I'm not sure whether he was technically under the military or not, but he operated directly under the Generalissimo.

He imported a lot of German specialists, technicians, and so on, for training. This was one reason why the term "Gestapo" has been used. Some of these Germans stayed on long after relations between the governments were broken. We would still meet some of these German advisers to Tai Li walking in the hills in Chungking.

LEVENSON: When you say advisers, what sorts of people were they?

J. SERVICE: They were teaching police methods, that sort of thing. We'll come into this later on, but Tai Li, after the German connection was ended, started the American connection.

[218]

J. SERVICE: Very often there were other secret police. The military had their own police organization. The gendarmerie had its own investigative or police unit. There was a lot of overlap and competition between these various groups.

Their primary concern was Communists and Communism. In places like Shanghai they ostensibly were working against the puppets, the people like Wang Ching-wei who went over to the Japanese.

But, by and large, eventually they pretty much hooked up with the puppets, because the common enemy of both of the puppets and the Chungking people were the Communists. A lot of the secret police organizations were--maybe compromised is not the right word--but anyway they were working fairly closely with the puppet people.

They had prisons of various kinds--political prisons. They had, I mentioned earlier, some thought reform institutions. When foreigners talked about concentration camps in China which we did, we used the term concentration camp--it was generally in reference to this sort of thing.

Prisoners were generally students, people they thought were left wing. As I said, people who were working for the industrial co-ops would get put in these places. Generally you were required to read proper material, study the *San Min Chu I*, Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles*, read Chiang Kai-shek's book, *China's Destiny*, write self-criticism, your own psychological history. If you acknowledged that your thoughts had been wrong and you were going to reform, generally you were let out. If you were stubborn, you might stay.

Some people were undoubtedly tortured, and we'll hear more about that. But, these places weren't at all of the scope of the concentration camps, Buchenwald or anything like that. And the purpose was not extermination.

Famine in Honan

LEVENSON: I interrupted you. You were talking about Loyang.

J. SERVICE: I don't know that there is much to say about Loyang, except that I saw something of the famine. I didn't get out into the worst areas. In the next year after this, the Japanese came down from the north and just walked through. The people turned against the Chinese armies that had been impoverishing them, starving them to

[219]

J. SERVICE: death. The famine was partly because of the crop failure, but also because of the tremendous impositions of hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers. Anyway, I wrote a long report about it, which Esherick has got. So, we don't need to go into it now.(Esherick, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-19.)

Food and Lodging on the Road

LEVENSON: You talk about famine and you talk about living Chinese style. What sort of food did you get in these inns along the way?

J. SERVICE: Wonderful! There was no rationing in China. It was purely a matter of having money. Even in the famine areas if you had the money, you could live pretty well. Of course, small inns don't serve cordon bleu food. It's simple food. Very often in north China, in small villages or towns on the road, the meal might be dried garlic and mant'ou, steamed bread, which is very nice.

The people up in the Kansu Corridor are mostly Mohammedans and will not touch pork. They wouldn't let us open cans that we had with us or use their cooking pots. But, the food was very good--beef and mutton and round flat crusty loaves of bread baked in large brick ovens.

The north China people eat steamed bread, different kinds of wheat and kaoliang millet, and so on. We didn't get rice except in the large towns. But noodles, in a place like Sian, wonderful noodles. Mien, Chinese mien, of all different kinds.

We ate at the street peddlers' stalls a lot of the time. Especially breakfast, eggs, things like that you could get on the street. We may not have eaten the fanciest food, but it was always good.

LEVENSON: Were your Chinese companions willing to eat off the stalls?

J. SERVICE: Yes, except for a few. Some were fussy about it. The "American-Chinese" was squeamish.

Accommodations were simplified by the fact that in the early years of the Sino-Japanese war the Russians had sent a lot of supplies to China down this route by truck, and the Chinese had set up hostels along the road in all the main towns. Each of

[220]

J. SERVICE: these old garrison military post towns had a temple, generally a temple to a god of war or some local deity. The Chinese had used these old temples. They'd fixed them up, repaired them, whitewashed them, and turned them into hostels. They had a kitchen and some staff.

So, our group stayed in these hostels all the way up and down Kansu. We slept every night in front of the gods, [laughter] the Buddhist hell, and so on. But, they were very pleasant and comfortable hostels, and they helped to make it an interesting and pleasant excursion.

The hostels hadn't been used for years because '39 was probably the last time that supplies had come down. But, the Chinese, whether from bureaucratic inertia or whether they still hoped that maybe they'd get more supplies from the Russians--had kept the places up, and they dusted them out and swept them out and got them ready for our party. That's it.

Ordered Home for Consultation

J. SERVICE: I got a telegram from Sian telling me to return! By this time it was October. So, I started south from Sian. At a place called Paochi, which was the end of the railway line at that time--it's just a little bit south of Sian--the INDUSCO had quite a large establishment. They got me a ride with a Chinese official. He was traveling inspector for the ministry of social affairs or something like that. He had a sedan, which was a very rare thing. So, I came south with him to Chengtu and then eventually by bus to Chungking. I arrived back in Chungking in early November.

Just about that time the embassy had gotten a telegram from the Department: "Why haven't you reported anything about the famine in Honan?" News reports had gotten out that there was an important famine in Honan. So fortunately Gauss' ire at my being away so long--I'd been away since late July and this was now early November, and I'd just been "tramping around north China" in his view--fortunately his ire was ameliorated because I was able to sit right down and write a long and exhaustive report on the famine. I also wrote a report about the oil wells. I had been in China by this time for four years. It may have been that or my travels--I don't know. Anyway, I was ordered back to the Department for consultation.

[221]

J. SERVICE: In those days there was no provision for paying travel for home leave; but a man could be ordered to the Department for consultation and then permitted to take some holiday in the States. So, I was ordered to the Department for consultation, and I left Chungking in early December, 1942.

[222]

VI. CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON: 1943

[Interview 7: September 26, 1977]

Chungking to Miami in Seven Days

LEVENSON: Last time we'd finished talking about your first big trip around Kansu, Tsinghai, Shensi, Honan, and so on, and then you were called home.

J. SERVICE: For consultation, which was a way of giving me a chance to have some vacation . I left in December, 1942. I flew to India, to Calcutta, where things were quite disorganized.

Later on Air Transport Command became very much of a big, airline-like operation. But then things were quite informal.

From Calcutta to Karachi they arranged for me to travel on a British Sunderland flying boat. So we crossed all of India in a flying boat. Rather amusing. We took off in the Hooghly River in Calcutta and put down on what they call a tank, a reservoir, some place in the middle of India, and then on to the Indus River at Karachi. From Karachi on it was all by DC-3, which was a big plane in those days. They look very small nowadays, of course.

We crossed the Arabian Sea, stopped at a landing strip that had been built on the beach in South Arabia. They had a tent beside the field, I remember, for a cafeteria, eating place, very much of a makeshift arrangement.

Arab--I suppose you could call them Bedouin--warriors would come out of the dunes riding horseback with their beautiful swords or scimitars, and look at the airplanes, I remember.

And on to Aden. Then we went across the widest part of Africa, from Khartoum by way of a line of new fields and hostels that had been put up hurriedly by Pan American, through El Fashar, Fort Lamy, Maidugeri, you know, and finally to Nigeria.

[223]

J. SERVICE: Then from Accra we got in a B-24 bomber, which was carrying strategic cargo. It was carrying large boxes of mica from India. I got in early enough to appropriate the tail gunner's seat. So I crossed the Atlantic in the tail gunner's lookout spot.

Just before we took off I remember a sergeant coming and yelling at a group of us in the plane, "Keep a sharp lookout. Plane went down yesterday. If you see anything floating in the water, let the crew

know."

We stopped at Ascension Island in the middle of the Atlantic, and then on to Brazil and eventually up through Trinidad and Miami.

LEVENSON: How long did it take?

J. SERVICE: Oh I forget. About a week, something like that. You didn't fly much at night except across the Atlantic. They flew at night over the Atlantic for navigation. But, the rest of the time was flying by day, and these little planes only did about a hundred and fifty miles an hour or something like that.

And one stopped over. I remember in Khartoum we slept up on the roofs of some building that had been taken over as a hostel, very nice and dry. No mosquitoes in Khartoum that I recall.

I'd been flying on a fairly high priority. Everything had to have priority, of course, to get on a plane. My orders said that I could proceed to my home in California for leave before going to Washington for consultation. When I reached Miami, I lost my air priority, because my orders said to go to California on leave.

So, I had to travel by train, and that was very, very difficult during the war. I stood up in a day coach to the northern part of Florida and then I managed to get a seat. By the time I got to New Orleans I was able to get a berth, so I finally slept for part of the way across.

I met Caroline down at my mother's in Claremont, and came up to Berkeley for Christmas. Saw the children. Young Bob who hadn't seen me for two years--he was five at this time--insisted, of course, he remembered me. Maybe he did; anyway, it was very pleasant.

[224]

The First Foreign Service Reporter from Chungking to Washington Since Pearl Harbor

J. SERVICE: Then in mid- January, [1943] I guess it was, I went to Washington for my consultation. This was very different from my previous experience in the Department. I'd been there before in 1938. Remember?

LEVENSON: Yes.

J. SERVICE: At that time one went around and left cards personally on the secretary, on the undersecretary. You had to call personally, go out to the homes of the head of FE [Far Eastern section], things like that.

Now, of course, there was a war on. Things were very different. You didn't have to do all this calling, and you didn't leave a card on the secretary.

It turned out that I was the first man to reach Washington from Chungking since Pearl Harbor--certainly the first man who'd done any political reporting. All the research analysis units and all the various agencies were eager for news of China, particularly first hand.

So, I started in. I was even asked to say a few words at a staff meeting of FE, which of course was something not expected of me in '38.

Briefs Lauchlin Currie, the White House "Man on China"

J. SERVICE: I was asked to call on Lauchlin Currie, one of President Roosevelt's several special assistants, each one of them assigned to certain fields. One of Currie's fields was China. He was the White House man on China, you might say.

He'd been out in China early in '41, just before I got there, and he'd been back there a second time in the summer of '42, just after I'd started my trip to the northwest. So I'd never actually met Currie. But, he knew Vincent. I assume, from what I knew later on, that they were in correspondence with each other. Anyway, Vincent had told me to look up Currie.

[225]

J. SERVICE: I was asked to go and see various other people, Colonel Donovan, head of OSS, and so on. But, the Currie interview, Currie meeting, was probably the most important.

LEVENSON: How would you assess his competence for the position he held?

J. SERVICE: I think he was a very able man. He was a professional economist, who had come into the government by that route. He was obviously a man capable of assimilating a great deal of information. He had been, I think, very favorably impressed with China when he first arrived. He'd known T.V. Soong in Washington. Then later on, in China, as he knew more about China, his views had changed.

Of course, I didn't know all this when I first met him. He wanted to get my impressions and drew me out. So I started to tell him my reactions to my trip to the northwest. As I had seen a good deal of the grassroots in China, I felt rather pessimistic about the Kuomintang and about our attachment to the Kuomintang, our unquestioning support of it. I expected that the situation in China was eventually going to blow up.

He was much interested in this and indicated that he generally agreed with my views. He also let me get the impression that "the man across the street" shared his thinking. This meant the White House—Roosevelt—as Currie's offices were in the old State, War, Navy Building, at the corner of 17th and Pennsylvania. It's just to the west of the White House.

Roosevelt did know Ed Snow quite well, and he also was a friend of Evans Carlson, a Marine colonel who had been out to China and had written books about the Eighth Route Army.

Currie Urges Service to Help Build "Backfire" to Counter Mme. Chiang's Propaganda Furor

J. SERVICE: Currie referred to the fact that Mme. Chiang was in Washington creating a terrific furor--furor of propaganda favorable to the Kuomintang and said that it was a real problem and something had to be done to "build a backfire"-- the phrase he used--against this publicity. She was appealing over the head of the president by going directly to Congress, stirring up a lot of sympathy for aid to China, really attacking the whole strategy of the war, which was Germany first and the Far

East second. This strategy was something that a lot of the Republicans, Luce and the China group, never accepted.

[226]

J. SERVICE: I remember [chuckling] in the Department at that period somebody on the White House staff called over and wanted to be instructed on how to pronounce the name Chiang. I gave him a telephone lesson on how to say Chiang.

Arranges Meeting with Drew Pearson and Other Journalists

J. SERVICE: Currie wanted me to talk to Drew Pearson particularly. His office arranged a meeting. There was a little bar in the basement of the Hay-Adams Hotel. The Hay-Adams was just across Lafayette Square from the White House. I'm not sure whether it's still standing or not, but it was one of the nice old Washington hotels. I was supposed to look at the back of the bar, a very dark cocktail lounge, in the basement of the Hay-Adams at a certain time. I went there and sure enough Drew Pearson was there. We had a nice long talk.

I saw him several times later on. Of course, I saw a lot of other newspaper people too during this period. But one had to be a little bit careful of being known as a friend of Drew's. He rarely telephoned me. And he would never talk over the telephone.

LEVENSON: What were your personal impressions of him as an investigative journalist?

J. SERVICE: [chuckling] Drew was of course a hell of a good newspaperman. He had an interest in China. He'd been out in China, as a lot of newspaper people had. He'd known Hurley and had a grudge against Hurley. Of course, Hurley wasn't an issue at this time in '43, but became one later on. He'd had a grudge against Hurley ever since Hurley was minister of war I think.

He had an enormous capacity for carrying a whole lot of various stories and information in his head. I suppose anybody in that kind of work does. He was not terribly fussy or meticulous about details. Almost anything that you gave to Drew would somehow get a little bit changed or garbled. It never came out exactly the way it went in.

But, of course, he became a tremendously important journalistic force because a lot of people fed him information. People that knew of scandal or corruption or misdoings, a lot of them would get the word to Drew. So, he did pick up an awful lot of dirt. I think he was probably the most influential newsman in America during that period.

[227]

LEVENSON: Did you like him?

J. SERVICE: Oh personally yes, extremely pleasant.

But that was only one thing. Currie wanted me to talk to other people, spread the word that things in China were not the rosy picture that the press was spreading. He said that he would try to make arrangements and encourage journalists to go to China, because China was such a minor field that not

many first rate news people were going out there. He was trying to encourage people such as Eric Sevareid and Raymond Clapper to visit China. If they came out, I was to feel that it would be helpful if I would give them the true picture, because one problem, as I mentioned before, was that the Kuomintang always tried to smother these people, keep them away from American contacts.

Currie Requests Letters from the Field, Out of Channels

J. SERVICE: Also, he wanted me to write him letters from the field. Well, he hoped that I would keep him briefed on things of special interest. What he was particularly anxious for was that if I wrote a report or knew of a report that would be especially interesting to him, to alert him to its existence. A great difficulty for him was that, working in the White House, he had no reporting staff. He had no field agents or anything like that. He felt that the State Department and other agencies weren't really keeping him informed.

The old business, the bureaucratic run-around, "Well, we'll give you anything; you just ask for it." [laughter] But if you don't know what exists, you can't ask for it. So, what he wanted me to do was to let him know so that he could ask for things.

LEVENSON: Was there anything improper in this?

J. SERVICE: Well, this was out of channels, shall we say. It was sort of an unusual thing. It surprised me. I didn't mention it to the people in FE at the State Department. I may have mentioned it to Larry Salisbury. I'm not sure. But, I mentioned it as soon as I got back to Chungking, to Vincent. Vincent was my chief, in the sense that he was number two in the embassy.

[228]

J. SERVICE: Vincent didn't seem to be surprised. He said, "Well, this is the way the White House operates. After all, it is the White House, the office of the president. You follow your own judgment; my suggestion would be that if this is the way they want to operate, you might as well go along."

As a matter of fact, I never felt very comfortable. I never wrote very many letters. Later on, when I joined Stilwell's staff and was working under John Davies, I found that John had some contacts established. He already had his communications with people like Currie and with [Harry] Hopkins and various other people including influential senators. So that as long as I was working with John, I usually left this to him.

I didn't do very much after John was removed and I was back in China. In the Hurley days I wrote a few letters, but never very many.

LEVENSON: One of my reasons for asking at this point about your estimate of Currie's general position and ability is that I'm trying to establish the level of information on China that was reaching Roosevelt and what priority he gave it.

J. SERVICE: Currie had other responsibilities, I'm sure, besides simply China. He was involved in Lend-Lease, and I think most of these assistants had changing responsibilities. But one of his standing assignments was China.

I would guess, but I really have no way of knowing, that in the overall world picture China ranked relatively low. Sometimes it was more important and a hotter issue than at other times. It was certainly an important issue at the particular moment when I was there because of Mme. Chiang's arrival.

Report on Kuomintang-Communist Situation: Service as Prophet of China's Civil War

J. SERVICE: The only man I knew well in the Department was a man named Larry Salisbury who had been second secretary in Peking when I was a language student and with whom I had traveled to Inner Mongolia in the summer of '36. Salisbury wasn't directly in China affairs. He was handling special affairs. It was sort of an overall sweep. He was much interested in the fact that I had taken this long trip and also that I had impressions and observations that hadn't been reported. So, he urged me to sit down and write sort of a summary report. This became my memorandum of January 23, 1944.

[228a]

From Stanley K. Hornbeck Papers--Box 381--John Service File
July 27, 1944

There has come to my attention recently a dispatch from Chungking entitled "The Situation in China" with which there is enclosed a memorandum prepared by an officer of the Embassy under the title "The Situation in China and Suggestions Regarding American Policy."

The Embassy calls attention to the memorandum, states that "while in some respects it may be hypercritical and while we are not prepared to support it without qualification, we consider that it is a very able and thoughtful analysis and we believe that it will be of interest to officers of the Department concerned with the political and military situation in the Far East to read the first 9 pages in their entirety as they delineate concisely the background of the present critical developments generally along lines of the Embassy's concept of what has been happening in free China and why."

The memorandum under reference covers 19 pages of foolscap, single space. The first 9 pages, to which the Ambassador calls attention, consist for the most part of an indictment of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek. In outline, it lays down propositions as follows: "The situation in China is rapidly becoming critical. The Japanese strategy in China, which has been as much political as military, has so far been eminently successful. The position of the Kuomintang and the Generalissimo is weaker than it has been for the past ten years. The Kuomintang is not only proving itself incapable of averting a debacle by its own initiative: on the contrary, its policies are policies precipitating the crisis. On the internal political front the desire of the Kuomintang leaders to perpetuate their own power overrides all other considerations. On the economic front the Kuomintang is showing itself inept and selfishly short-sighted by progressive estrangement of its allies. On the military front the Kuomintang appears to have decided to let America win the war and to have withdrawn for all practical purposes from active participation. These apparently suicidal policies of the Kuomintang have their roots in the composition and nature of the Party. The present policies of the Kuomintang seem certain of failure: if that failure results in a collapse of China it will have consequences disastrous both to our immediate military plans and our long-term interests in the Far East."

There comes next the proposition: "There are, however, active and constructive forces in China opposed to the present trends of the Kuomintang leadership which, if given a chance, might avert the threatened collapse." This is followed by two pages (10-11) in elaboration of that proposition. Therein there is underscored the proposition: "Democratic reform is the crux of all important Chinese problems, military, economic, and political."

Part II of this memorandum (pages 11-19) consists of suggestions regarding American policy. In outline, it proceeds: "In the light of this developing crisis what should be the American attitude toward

[228b]

China? The Kuomintang and Chiang are acutely conscious of their dependence on us and will be forced to appeal for our support. The Kuomintang's dependence can give us great influence. There are three general alternatives open to us. Our choice between these alternatives must be determined by our objectives in China. We should adopt the third alternative--a coordinated and positive policy. This positive policy should be political. The implementation of this political policy, though difficult in some respects, is practical and can be carried out by many means. There must be effective coordination of the policies and actions of all American Government agencies concerned in these dealings with China. Since all measures open to us should not be applied simultaneously, there should be careful selection and timing. Specific measures which might be adopted in the carrying out of this positive policy include the following. Most of these measures can be applied progressively. The program suggested contains little that is not already being done in an uncoordinated and only partially effective manner. The program constitutes only very modified and indirect intervention in Chinese affairs."

[Page 3]

[Note : The material quoted in the two paragraphs above consist of sentences, verbatim and in sequence, which constitute the subheading and, in a few instances, underscored parts of the text of the memorandum .]/

Comment:

Seldom if ever have I ever seen any document prepared by a responsible officer of the Department or of the Foreign Service, of no matter what age or length of experience, expressive of such complete self-assurance on the part of its author that he knew the facts, all of the facts, and that he could prescribe and was prescribing the remedy, the one and only remedy, for a bad situation and could indicate and was indicating the way, the only way, to lead from bad to good. In many contexts I have seen and have heard and have read about things wrong with China. Never before, not even in Rodney Gilbert's book entitled *What's Wrong With China*, have I encountered so sweeping a charge that almost everything--except a certain amount of liberal sentiment in some quarters--is wrong with China. Never before, however, have I heard or read it laid down flatly that "Democratic reform is the crux of all important Chinese problems, military, economic and political."

I have heard before, but not from trained and responsible officials, a suggestion that it might be well for the United States to forget certain outstanding features of its policy regarding China, such as the policy of the "Open Door"; but never before have I heard it suggested by an official that among three

general alternatives open to us one is that we might "give up China as hopeless and wash our hands of it altogether." I have heard before many proposals and plans conceived and expounded by authors for the improvement of our policy regarding and our relations with China; but never have I seen one so elaborately compounded of prescriptions regarding what we should desist from or refrain from doing and prescriptions of what

[Page 4]

we should do, in detail, and with sequence of timing, which indicated

[228c]

so completely the lack on the part of its author of understanding of the difference between that which may be ideally desirable and that which is politically practicable.

Upon finishing perusal for the second time of the memorandum above under reference, I turned to refresh my knowledge of its author .

[See Register, Service, John S.]

[229]

J. SERVICE: I don't think I need to go into detail about this because it's been published many times. (Esherick, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-176.) It emphasized the probability of eventual civil war. I didn't come out and say, "The Communists are going to win," but I said that civil war would be a disaster for the peace, stability, development of China, and that the Communists might be extremely difficult to defeat. I urged that we should try to find out something about the Communists by sending people up there, sending officers up there.

John Davies was coming to the same conclusion at about the same time. Even Drumright who was then in China, made a similar suggestion. But somehow my memorandum upset the established powers a great deal, mainly Hornbeck, who had been in the Department for a long, long time, and was long away from any sort of direct contact with China. He was called adviser to the secretary of state. He didn't have any direct administrative role.

The head of FE, the Far Eastern section, was a man named Max Hamilton. Max had also been in China for a short while as a foreign service officer, but also back in the '20s, I think early '20s. He had resigned from the Foreign Service to take an administrative job. In those days you couldn't stay in the Department for any real length of time if you were in the Foreign Service. If you wanted to take a state department job, then you resigned from the Foreign Service, which Hamilton had done. But he was completely dominated by Hornbeck, who was a very overbearing, dictatorial type of person.

The head of China Affairs was a man named George Atcheson, who had been in China more recently but not during the war. He'd been in China most recently during '37-'38 period.

My memo, as I say, caused a lot of waves. Hornbeck's first reactions were apparently vitriolic. He wrote on the margins "ridiculous," "preposterous," "scandalous," and various other characterizations.

I was then asked to rewrite the memorandum, in a less personal way, using embassy despatches where possible. The embassy had said some of the same things in less dramatic or direct ways.

Meanwhile, the Department sent off a telegram to the embassy without telling me.

[230]

Levenson : The embassy in Chungking?

J. SERVICE: Yes. They sent off a telegram to the embassy in Chungking--without mentioning my name--and grossly distorting my conclusions. [laughter] You can see it here on page 199 in *U.S. Foreign Relations* [China 1943].

They say, "A report has reached us," not mentioning me, making a mystery-- "presumably based on statements made by Edgar Snow and Chou En-lai." Well I had not seen Edgar Snow for several years. He'd been in Chungking briefly in 1941 at the time of the New Fourth Army incident, and he had broken that story by getting out of China, sending his reports from Hong Kong, I think. But anyway, he'd been persona non grata. So, I hadn't seen Ed Snow for several years. And Chou En-lai, well, of course, I'd been traveling in the northwest for four months. I had seen Chou En-lai very briefly in Chungking, but my report came not at all from Chou En-lai. "To the effect that--" and so on and so on. Then, as I say, they distort my conclusions and ask for the embassy's comments without mentioning who the embassy was supposed to be commenting on.

The embassy came back and quite rightly wouldn't buy, wouldn't go all the way for the rather distorted questions. But, they did say that, "Liquidation of the Communists by the present Kuomintang leadership is a question of when rather than whether" (which, of course, was pretty strong substantiation of what I said), and that most people assumed that there would be a civil war, probably not during the war against Japan. I hadn't said there would be civil war before the end of the war [with Japan] at all. I talked about after.

FE asked me to rewrite my memo again, which. I did. I spent most of the month writing and rewriting this silly memo, based on the Chungking reply. Then Bob Smyth, who was a Foreign Service officer assigned in FE, tacked on a conclusion. I finally refused to sign the thing. I got very annoyed, partly because of the rewriting of my memo by someone else. They finally said, "Well, we'll put both your names on it, Smyth and Service." I think I finally signed it after there had been some toning down and also having his name on it.

But Hamilton made some remark to Ringwalt, who was in the Department then getting ready to go to China I think. Ringwalt had mentioned my memorandum or my suggestion. Anyway, Hamilton said something to the effect: "Pay no attention to Service. Don't take him too seriously. He's young and immature." Ringwalt got some amusement, I think, in telling me about this. I was all ready to go and storm Hamilton's office, but was finally dissuaded from making a fool of myself. [laughter]

[231]

J. SERVICE: Hamilton's attitude was very odd. It was such a contrast to Currie, who said, "Look, we've got a problem and we've got to do something about it." I had lunch with Hamilton, and certainly in the beginning our relations were quite friendly. He was commenting, sort of in a

despairing way, about the distorted American impressions of China, how someday there was going to be a rude awakening and this was going to be very bad when Americans found out things weren't as rosy as they'd thought.

I said, "Well, after all, we've got some responsibilities. There's censorship in China. It's very hard for the true story to get out," and that we should be doing something. I argued that we should be taking an active role in informing the American public. We owed it to the public and we had to counter Chinese censorship by helping American newspaper people get the news.

[lowering voice and paraphrasing Hamilton] "Oh, we could never do that, could never do that. It would be very embarrassing and very difficult. If it became known that we were taking an active role in news, it would be very embarrassing."

His whole attitude was a dithering, milquetoasty sort of business.

LEVENSON: This situation was not unique to China. There have been plenty of other places where there's been censorship.

J. SERVICE: Oh yes.

LEVENSON: Were there precedents for Foreign Service officers informing the American news corps?

J. SERVICE: Oh, I'm sure there had been. Sure! In 1931 in the Manchurian Incident-- my trials bring out--the Foreign Service people in Manchuria and in China generally made sure that the newspaper people got the true story.

Hamilton was an unusually cautious, conservative type of person, I think. And perhaps he was prescient enough to expect that I was likely to be indiscreet or controversial. I don't know.

A lot of Foreign Service people were not used to the idea of American government being in news. The O[office of W[ar] I[nformation] had just been set up. The government had never had anything like this before. You know, a lot of people in the State Department are still not very enthusiastic about this role of government. They would much prefer to stick to the traditional

[232]

J. SERVICE: role of diplomacy rather than get ourselves involved in public information, propaganda, cultural affairs, and so on. Particularly propaganda, that's usually the bad word that's used.

There was another comment, I remember, by a fellow Foreign Service officer who survived what came later. He read my report, said it was very interesting, and it would be a terrific assignment, this business of going to Yen'an. I suggested sending some Foreign Service officers to Yen'an to observe. But, he wasn't sure that he would want the job because--He said, "Oh, the KMT government would be awfully down on that person." [laughing] It might not be a very good idea."

LEVENSON: Who was that?

J. SERVICE: I think I'd better not mention the name. [laughter]

LEVENSON: What sort of security was put on this document?

J. SERVICE: Oh, I'm not sure what the security was. The classification was probably confidential, because everything was at least confidential. There was practically nothing written that wasn't classified in some way or another.

LEVENSON: What sort of circulation did it have?

J. SERVICE: I think I showed the thing around to various people I talked to, but then I was talking to people like Donovan and OSS people, Currie. After all, I gave Currie a copy. It was passed around quite widely. The State Department was concerned. What they were really concerned about was the fact that I was talking to other people. This was why they went to these absurd lengths to try to rebut it, because, of course, they knew that I was talking to Currie, and they knew that OSS was interested. I was being called to go to all sorts of debriefing sessions at OSS and the army MIS [Military Intelligence Section], and Navy ONI [Office of Naval Intelligence].

When they got their reply from Chungking, you see--here, this is on page 205 *Foreign Relations, 1943, China*. -- they circularized to all the head offices of the Department their message to Chungking and Chungking's reply without sending them my memo.

[233]

J. SERVICE: So, this was all sent in, and then Hornbeck put out a memo in reply to mine which is very amusing. This is Hornbeck. It's a memorandum by the adviser on political relations. The State Department historian's footnote, you see, says, "is commenting on memorandum by John S. Service, dated January 23 (Christopher G. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: the United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945*, London: Hamilton, 1978).

I think it's worth reading a little bit of it here.

"We should I think maintain an attitude of intelligent skepticism with regard to reports emphasizing the strength of the (quote) Communist (end quote) forces in China and expressing apprehensiveness that civil war in China may be imminent." Of course, I didn't say in my thing it was imminent. That was circulated to try to offset my memo.

I was talking recently to an English historian, Christopher Thorne, who has written a book coming out very soon now on the relations between the Allies during World War II.* He's done a lot of research in British cabinet archives and British Foreign Office archives. He was telling me that in the summer of 1943--it was six months or so after this--that Hornbeck asked to go to London to consult with the British to make sure we were together on our Far Eastern policy. He raised their eyebrows in London, Foreign Office eyebrows, by his insistence that the so-called Communists were of no importance and no concern at all and that Chiang Kai-shek, if the need should ever arise, would have no difficulty whatever in coping with the problem.

LEVENSON: Was Christopher Thorne's belief that the British were much better informed?

J. SERVICE: Yes. This did not accord [laughing] with their views. [laughter] As I said, Clark Kerr, the British ambassador in Chungking, was the man who was most alarmed about the New Fourth Army incident.

The British had a man named Michael Lindsay living in Yenan who had been there since Pearl Harbor. There were other people, people named Band who'd come through from Peking, and so on. Anyway the British apparently were willing to be a little bit more realistic than Hornbeck.

[234]

LEVENSON: I asked earlier if you'd taken notes on your trip?

J. SERVICE: Oh, no. I didn't have any notes. I didn't keep any diary. I was just sort of reporting off the top of my head. Yes, it's been one of my drawbacks really that I never could be systematic enough to take notes. Later on I took some notes at various times. But, on this trip I didn't try to take any.

Comments on Developing Relations Between the State Department and U.S.Intelligence Agencies

LEVENSON: You've raised a question indirectly that was on our formal agenda which concerns the relationship between the various intelligence agencies that were developing. You said that you were raising eyebrows by being debriefed by these people. But, when you use a term like "debrief" it implies, at least to me, that there is official recognition that this is part of your duties.

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. There was no question about that. An office was set up to inform all concerned agencies about arrivals of people who could be debriefed. Generally speaking, there was an intent to cooperate. After all, we were all fighting the war. So, word was circulated that I was there and available for debriefing.

But, I think what bothered my State Department superiors was not so much my talking to the lower level analyst groups as the fact that I was being talked to by people like Currie in the White House and by Donovan of OSS and so on. I'm not sure whether they knew it, but I was asked to talk to or taken to see various senators. I talked to Senator [Claude Denson] Pepper. There were a number of people that in one way or another I saw. Michael Straight, who was then the owner-publisher of the *NewRepublic*, talked to me.

I soon got beyond the normal--proportions isn't quite the right word--of a third secretary in the field. Anyway, it upset the State Department.

A New Feel for the Need for Information from China and a New Engagement in the Influencing of American Policy

J. SERVICE: After consultation, and a bit more leave in California, I went back to China: a whole bunch of us took off to China in early April [1943] I think. They were building up the staff in China.

[235]

J. SERVICE: People had been repatriated from internment by the Japanese. So, a whole group of us went.

I think that there had been a change in my own situation. Partly because I'd been in Washington, I'd seen the end users of the reports. I'd been complimented a good deal on the reporting from Chungking, including being complimented by Alger Hiss, I remember, who was working then for Hornbeck! I'd gotten a new feel, which I hadn't before, of the need and demand and interest in information from China. I had become engaged by having my own judgment and maturity, shall we say, questioned.

LEVENSON: Engaged in what sense?

J. SERVICE: I'd become personally engaged in the sense of being much more involved in trying to make sure that what I thought was the correct picture got back to the States and more interested in American policy.

The whole incident there was a sort of a foreshadowing of what eventually was the final denouement. You can change Hornbeck for Hurley, and you might change Drew Pearson and the press for [Philip] Jaffe. But, the basic issues, our concern, our conviction, our certainty, that civil war in China would be disastrous was there right from the very beginning and that American policy should be to try to avoid a civil war. We should not get involved in supporting one side, which already in '43 I thought might well be the losing side, although we weren't so certain then as we were later on.

We were still at this time thinking that the Kuomintang could be saved and that our efforts should be toward trying to get the Kuomintang to reform. At this point we didn't know much about the Communists and we hadn't gotten to the point--which we eventually reached--of expecting the Communists to win.

At any rate, what happened later on seems to be pretty much foreshadowed in this incident in 1943.

LEVENSON: Did you run into troubles at all with the embassy in Chungking as you wrote more and more?

J. SERVICE: No. I think engaged is not the right word. I mean up to that point I had certainly done a very conscientious job. I reported when I was supposed to report. I saw something that I thought was worth reporting and reported on it. But, I didn't have the zeal that I eventually developed. While I wrote a tremendous volume of stuff I was generally, shall we say, an outside

[236]

J. SERVICE: observer. I obviously wasn't aloof later on. But I think that the embassy never tried to discourage me or disagree with me. In fact, Vincent saw things very much as I saw them.

Interestingly enough, almost as soon as we got back to Chungking, Vincent was transferred back to the Department. He became head of China Affairs. Hamilton was sent off to the Soviet Union. Atcheson then became deputy chief of mission, number two in Chungking.

In the Department during the January hassle Atcheson had tried to argue against my thesis by recalling that the Communists were willing, in 1937, to take orders from the national government. It's true that in the early part of the war, the honeymoon period of the United Front, that they had worked together fairly closely. By the time Atcheson had been in Chungking a short while, he saw the

situation much as everyone else did.

I don't think there was ever any putting the clamp on me or clamping down on me from the embassy.

[237]

VII: POLITICAL REPORTING: TRANSFER TO STILWELL'S STAFF

Posted to One-Man Observation Post in Lanchow

J. SERVICE: Very soon after I got back to Chungking, we were opening up listening posts or one-man observation posts at various places. They weren't formally called consulates. The Chinese government didn't want us to call them consulates. We weren't expected to perform normal consular functions and duties. Lanchow was one of the posts. I'm not quite sure why I was picked to go. They had more people to fill in in Chungking. Four or five officers went out the same time I did.

I'd been in Lanchow the summer before, so I knew something of the background and the people; I was very happy to go.

One big problem was how to get there. The China Tea Corporation ran trucks up the road to Lanchow to send tea. There was no tea grown in north China. This was a government monopoly. The government set up a lot of monopolies, trading companies, during the war. Tea was one of them. An H.H. Kung enterprise. The China Tea Corporation agreed to allow me to ride in one of their trucks.

Carries Two Hundred Thousand Chinese Dollars for an OSS Caper

J. SERVICE: A couple of days before I was to take off, an American navy officer, Commodore Miles, who was always known as "Mary" Miles, got in touch with George Atcheson--never contacted me directly--and said that they wanted me to take some money up to Lanchow.

He just dumped on George Atcheson a suitcase with two hundred thousand Chinese dollars officially this was ten thousand U.S. dollars at the official rate of exchange. Two hundred thousand

[238]

J. SERVICE: dollars in five and ten dollar notes is quite a pile of money! Would I please take this up to Lanchow because the OSS had an expedition coming through Tibet from India through Lhasa, and they were going to end up in Lanchow? They were going to need some money to pay off the caravan.

[laughing] So, Atcheson said okay. And I said, "George, this is the craziest goddamn thing." I'm traveling on a truck just by myself. There was absolutely no guard, no security. People are held up along the roads. Banditry is endemic everywhere. I mentioned before seeing people who had been robbed the day before trying to find their valuables they'd thrown off the bus.

Furthermore, there were perfectly normal channels for transmitting funds. He could do it through a bank. He could do it through the post office. China was an operating country, and transmission of funds was a very feasible business. But, it was absolutely typical of this strange person and the weird ways that he operated. Everything had to be secret. Therefore you didn't want to transmit funds in the

normal way.

It's like the Watergate business, laundering funds, and so on. People in Lanchow knew that this expedition was going to arrive. They weren't going to come from nowhere. But, Miles just wanted to operate that way, and so I was stuck with this two hundred thousand in cash.

So, what to do? I was taking some things along, a few minimum groceries. Coffee was worth its weight in gold if you could give anybody a little coffee. I was going to take some presents of tea because tea in the northwest of China is very much more expensive, very prized, and so on, good gifts. I had a few staples and stores I was going to take. I expected to stay in Lanchow for a year or two.

So, I went down and bought a lot more tea from the China Tea Corporation and took the tea out of the boxes, filled the boxes with bank notes, and then mixed them in with my groceries and other stuff in a couple of wooden boxes. When we got ready to go, why they were just thrown in the back of the truck, you see, and then I forgot them, paid no more attention to them.

Before I left Chungking I had talked to Atcheson, who was then number two as I said, about the possibility of trying to get into the Communist areas. He said, "By all means, if you have a chance, do it."

[239]

J. SERVICE: Tolstoy, who was the name of the OSS man--he was grandson or something of the novelist, had been in the Russian cavalry as a young man and then left Russia and came to the States. This was what made him, I suppose, a prime candidate to send through Tibet, because you had to ride horseback. He was a very nice chap.

Anyway, I met Tolstoy in Lanchow and delivered the money, and he stayed on for a while. He was also very much interested in my idea of trying to get into the Communist areas. We thought we might be able to do it by going down the Yellow River. From Lanchow you can go down the river by inflated skin rafts. They use cow hides, blow them up, and make rafts out of them. You can go down to the city of Ningsia. From there we thought we might be able to get into the Communist areas from the north. There were some Kuomintang troops there, but they weren't very strong and there's a lot of open country.

The news we had was that these Kuomintang troops in the north were really sort of co-existing on a rather cozy basis with the Communists. So, we thought we might be able to do it. But, the Chinese in Lanchow were much too much on the alert for anything like this. [chuckle] They weren't about to let us go down to Ningsia.

LEVENSON: Was there any value, significant value, from the OSS expedition through Tibet?

J. SERVICE: None whatever that I know of. It was irrelevant, peripheral to the war. There were various rumors that had started that the Japanese had gotten into Tibet, into Lhasa, and that Japanese agents were active there. There was apparently one Japanese Buddhist who had been in Lhasa for a good many years. But, they didn't really prove that he was a secret agent or that he was very effective or that he subverted the Tibetans. So I don't think the operation accomplished anything. Maybe it

accomplished a negative result in proving there wasn't anything to worry about, no Japanese subversion. The Japanese weren't about to take over Tibet.

Truck Breaks Down: Two Days on the Grand Trunk Road Listening to Coolies

J. SERVICE: Several days out of Chungking the truck had trouble, broke down--the trucks were all old and tied together with string and bits of wire--and we spent a couple of days beside the road.

[240]

J. SERVICE: The road had curved. We broke down just beyond a curve. At the curve, fortunately, there was a little refreshment place run by an old peasant woman. She made noodles mostly and things like that, just very simple fare, and tea.

Most of the traffic was not truck but two wheel carts pulled by men or sometimes by animals. But this was Szechwan, so it was mostly human pullers rather than animal pullers. Other trucks went by. There were not many on this road north of Chengtu. But, the trucks would go by. I said to the driver, "Why don't you stop them?"

"Oh no. There's no use stopping them. We'll wait for another China Tea Corporation truck to come along, because all the drivers from the China Tea Corporation are from Ningpo." In other words, [laughter] it's the old regional kinsmen business. "When a tea corporation truck comes along we won't need to stop him. He'll just stop anyway and whatever he has we can use, and he won't leave until we get fixed up." Eventually some of his cohorts came along, his colleagues and friends, and they managed to get the truck rolling.

I spent almost two days in this little shack beside the road. It was quite an interesting experience because I would just sit in the back and coolies pulling these carts would come in and have a cup of tea or a bowl of noodles or something, meet others going up or down the road, talk.

LEVENSON: What did you pick up?

J. SERVICE: Oh! All sorts of things! What was interesting to them. What are the conditions down the road? Where are the troops grabbing coolies, because if they needed transport, they just grabbed people, hauled them off the streets. Conscription problems --They discussed all the things that would be of interest to them, sometimes crops, but mostly conscription and impositions by the soldiers. They talked about riots and disturbances which we hadn't heard of in various cities, where there'd been civil rebellion or resistance to some of these things.

Occasionally I would reveal that I understood Chinese and then join the conversation. But it was a very instructive two days. I was rather sorry that we had to get back on the road, although the truck drivers themselves were interesting.

[241]

The Truck Driver Network

J. SERVICE: The year before I'd been living with a bunch of intellectuals--engineers and

newspapermen. This time I was traveling and living and sleeping with truck drivers, because wherever we stopped there would be lots of other truck drivers. They always got together.

I insisted on treating the party the first night out. After that, I was accepted and always joined them at meals and things like that.

We stopped for several days in the next main town while the truck was worked on.

In most of these towns you can't park your trucks in town because the streets are too narrow. The towns were built long before motor roads, of course. Generally outside the town there'd be a stretch along the road where people would park and the drivers would squat there on their heels and chat and talk. So I went out to the edge of town where all the truck drivers were.

I finally found some drivers going to Lanchow and willing to take me for a consideration. I changed trucks and got to Lanchow by a different truck, which was a subject of a lot of concern to the local police later in Lanchow. I was staying with some missionaries. They would have been in trouble if I had not reported. So I reported right away.

But, the secret police were terribly concerned about how I'd gotten there without their knowing it, you see. [laughing] I did not give away the particular truck that brought me. I don't know whether they ever found out or not.

Reporting in Lanchow: A Heavy Secret Police Atmosphere

J. SERVICE: During this trip, when I had really nothing much to do--I wasn't with a group of people I could talk to and chat; we weren't looking for recollections of places mentioned in the Three Kingdoms and so on--I started noting the wall slogans. In this case I did take notes. But this was not apt to alarm the people I was with. I think if I had been taking a lot of notes on my earlier trip, people might have wondered what I was doing.

[242]

J. SERVICE: I spent, oh I suppose, about two months there in Lanchow and did a good deal of reporting on various things. There was a heavy secret police atmosphere, and surveillance of foreigners. There was a lot of rural unrest, peasant revolts against conditions.

This, I think, was the time [Walter] Lowdermilk (See Walter J. Lowdermilk, *Soil, Forest, and Water Conservation: China, Israel, Africa, United States*, Vol. 2, pp. 380-407, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.) and I met. Lowdermilk was up there on a trip, as an expert for the U.S. Department of State, one of these cultural experts that we were sending out. But the Chinese really weren't interested in culture.

Lowdermilk was one expert and there was another man who was an artificial insemination expert. This was fairly new at that time, artificial insemination. He was pretty disappointed when he got to China to find out that there was no possibility of doing anything. They had no facilities, no equipment. They just weren't geared up for anything like this. The Chinese simply wanted the latest thing in artificial insemination. So, he made a trip up [laughing] to the northwest and looked at some of their livestock and went home. That was about all that was accomplished, I think.

LEVENSON: I remember you had suggested that more cultural experts should be sent out. But I don't think you meant people in artificial insemination?

J. SERVICE: Oh, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. The kind of culture that we were talking about was, what, big "C" culture. Real culture. [laughter] Not artificial insemination.

LEVENSON: What did the foreign population of Lanchow consist of, and what were they doing?

J. SERVICE: There was a Russian consul there. The Russians had, I think, a regular consulate there. He was very much under surveillance. Of course the Russians do this to people in their own country, but he complained bitterly about it. He was an extremely friendly, nice guy. I got quite well acquainted with him.

The police were very annoyed at the way I arrived. Then, they were also annoyed with me for staying in the missionary place. There was a travel service hostel, and they kept saying, "We have a fine hostel here. Why don't you come and stay at the

[243]

J. SERVICE: hostel? You'd be very comfortable." This was so transparent, that it was very hard to avoid laughing. [laughter] I didn't move into the hostel. At the mission I had a room and a typewriter. I had a certain amount of privacy.

LEVENSON: What did you feel you accomplished up there in those two months?

J. SERVICE: Oh, I did a lot of reporting. Reporting is accomplishing. [laughter] I got a couple of commendations on these reports. If you got commended, in those days, that was really quite a thing. There weren't many commendations passed out for reporting.

Did I help the war along? I don't know. I was asked to report on all sorts of things-- movement of gold, trade with Sinkiang, all sorts of subjects that you're asked questions about, that somebody in Washington wants to know about.

I did a thing about trade between occupied and free China -- tremendous trade. I remember later on, the next time I was at the Department, being commended on this by Herbert Feis. He wanted to see me. He was economic adviser in the State Department, and this was something that Herbert Feis was interested in. All this became amusing later on, ironic in a way, because the great drawback in Feis's book *The China Tangle* was that he was such a close friend and so much influenced by Hornbeck. Feis gives his own view of things, or Hornbeck's view of things, and one of them is that these terrible young men are making life so difficult.

LEVENSON: Did you have any particular difficulties that are worth commenting on in finding materials for your economic reports?

J. SERVICE: For most of these reports, you couldn't find any hard and fast, solid data. The treasury wanted to know something about movements of gold. As I recall, I talked to a couple of bankers in Lanchow. They were in a position to know roughly, but they themselves didn't have any precise information because a lot of gold moves secretly. It's not handled through official channels.

Trade with the occupied areas, you saw the evidence all around you, the goods in the market, the stores. Then, you talked to people. How does this come across? Where does it come across? You pick up a lot of hearsay, second hand, but it was pretty well known, the main avenues for it coming in and which armies took the squeeze. Tang En-po was the man who was supposed to be making a lot of money out of it there in Honan province.

[244]

J. SERVICE: A lot of this is hearsay. Your reporting is only as good as your sources and your observation. But, generally speaking, if you have a very broad circle of people you can talk to, the broader the better, your information is good.

LEVENSON: That leads me really into my next question which was whether you ran into resistances. You were living with missionaries, or in the mission compound. Did this put you in wrong with, some people? Were your bankers willing to talk? You were American in a Chinese situation.

J. SERVICE: Generally speaking I got no resistance at all. If you had resistance it was apt to be from a government official, if he thought that you were looking for information which might be critical of the way things were being run or show him in a bad light. But I generally avoided going through government channels. This was one of the things that annoyed the Chinese the most, I think.

Later on when I went to Chengtu--I'll mention it later--to make an investigation there, very often I could completely avoid having to do the usual thing of going to the appropriate government agency or government bureau and asking a bureaucrat what's happening.

Assigned to General Joseph Stilwell's Staff, August, 1943

J. SERVICE: I was assigned to Stilwell's staff in August 1943. The assignment was something which I was very happy about, pleased. I had tried, and I think most of us tried one way or another, to get into uniform. I had talked about it in the Department when I was there in '43 and had been told very definitely, absolutely not, because the State Department was not willing to release any of its people. They couldn't recruit, and they just couldn't afford to lose people because the Department actually had more responsibilities. So they were not willing to let anyone take leave or quit to join the army.

I had talked to Stilwell once early on in Chungking about the possibility. He laughed and said, "Well, I'd like to have you, Service, but I could just see what Gauss' reaction would be," [laughter] which was quite true.

Gauss was very annoyed about my being assigned, not entirely on account of me because there were a couple of us assigned at the same time. But it was done by the Department

[245]

J. SERVICE: without consulting Gauss. The first he knew about it was a telegram saying that I was assigned to the army. He was annoyed, the way it was done, and of course he was annoyed at losing officers which he felt were needed by the embassy.

LEVENSON: Why was it done in your opinion?

J. SERVICE: Partly I think it was simply the State Department's anxiety to cooperate with the army. It was a request that was put through the highest channels. It came through Secretary of War Stimson to the secretary of state and put in very flattering terms that they wanted cooperation.

Vincent was the man in the Department who handled it. I think Vincent saw that it could be useful. Davies had already been assigned to the army, and Davies was in sort of a freewheeling position which was producing useful reports. There was quite a bad situation in Chungking. Bad maybe is too strong a word. There simply wasn't very good liaison between the army headquarters and the embassy. Gauss and Stilwell were alike in some ways. They were both rather prickly and each took the attitude, "Well, if he wants to talk to me, I'm available. Let him come over." This sort of thing.

It's always a bit of a question in a foreign country whether the ambassador has first rank or the army. I don't think these people were particularly concerned about that. Stilwell's attitude was, "Well, I'm just awful busy." So, there wasn't much liaison or contact between the two. Davies knew that I had good relations with Gauss and thought that I could be useful being a link.

There was a rationale in the case of all the people that were brought over, but I don't think we need to go into all that.

LEVENSON: Well, why not?

J. SERVICE: Really?

LEVENSON: Yes, sure.

J. SERVICE: It's sort of out of my field. Emmerson was a Japan language officer. We were getting ready to fight the Japanese in Burma. Davies thought it would be good to have a Japan man for propaganda, psych warfare and so on, interrogation of prisoners. The army was not very well prepared for it, certainly not in China.

[246]

J. SERVICE: Ludden was a man who was a frustrated soldier and would prefer to have been in the army. I think Davies originally thought that he would be a good man to maintain contact with the forces down in Burma, the army, fighting front.

Davies himself was spending more and more of his time back in India where there were a lot of political problems to worry about. Congress [party] and [Mahatma] Gandhi were opposing the war, famine was coming on.

Then, one of Davies' ideas from about this time was this idea which I had brought up, and Davies also had brought up, of trying to establish contacts with the Communist areas to find out what was happening in north China. Davies apparently always thought that I would be a good man for that.

His original plan was a very fancy one of getting Roosevelt's son, James, I think it was, to head up the group. I was to sort of lead him by the hand. But that didn't work out.

LEVENSON: Was the CBI, the China-Burma-India command, established at this point?

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. CBI had been set up--well, I forget--in February or March 1942. Now we're already in August '43.

There was a fairly large headquarters, Forward Echelon Headquarters, in Chungking which was where I was assigned. The Chungking headquarters actually didn't quite know what to do with me. This had all been worked out, as I say, at very high levels. The people actually on the ground weren't very clear about what I was to do, whether to give me an office and have me in an office job, or what.

For a while I was fairly busy counseling a number of agencies like OSS and Board of Economic Warfare which later on became Foreign Economic Administration. We set up a sort of a psych-war committee there in Chungking, on an inter-agency basis. Actually we spent most of our time talking about American attitudes and propaganda vis-a-vis the Kuomintang [laughing] more than we did about the Japanese. In other words what we should do to try to promote the cause and the spread of ideas of democracy in China. Anyway, that didn't last very long.

This was not a full time job. I was much more interested in doing what came naturally for me reporting. I did some of that, started that, and kept it up.

[247]

Becomes "Road Expert"

J. SERVICE: The head of G-2 at that time was Stilwell's son, Joe. He wasn't particularly interested in political things. He was much more the narrowly military intelligence type, combat intelligence, nuts-and-bolts type of intelligence. I don't think he was much concerned about Chinese politics.

He found out one day that I'd been over the Burma Road. He was quite excited about this because they were trying to get information, and everybody in headquarters had arrived in China since the Burma Road closed. No one there had been over it. "You drove over the Burma Road?!" So he had me write down everything I could remember about the road, its condition, bridges, ferries, terrain, cover, everything that could be useful as one type of intelligence, [laughter] just very primitive type of intelligence. So, I did the Burma Road, as much as I could dredge out of my memory.

Then he found out I'd been to the northwest. So I did the same for all the roads in the northwest I'd covered, Szechwan to Lanchow and Sian. I became a sort of road expert.

A Road Reporting Tour Through Kweichow, Yunnan, and Kwangsi

J. SERVICE: Then he decided that for contingent, future planning possibilities, they wanted to find out all they could about all the roads in the southern part of China leading into Indochina. Up until the fall of France most of the goods imported into China had gone in through Haiphong, then on up the railway or by these roads. There were several roads built into China from Indochina. This was after Hong Kong fell, of course.

After the fall of France, the Japanese moved into the northern part of Indochina. All these roads were stopped, and the Chinese had actually destroyed the roads in areas close to the border. Further back, most of the roads had simply been abandoned.

So G-2 dreamed up this idea of having a reconnaissance. They sent an army engineer officer and I was to escort him. We had two jeeps. An overseas Chinese from Singapore was assigned to us as a mechanic and interpreter, but he was absolutely no use as an interpreter. We never used him. [laughter] I don't think he knew Cantonese. His Chinese was Fukienese or something like that.

[248]

J. SERVICE: But anyway, we never got into areas where he seemed to be of any use. Almost always--and even in Kwangsi--I could use my Mandarin. My ears are flexible enough so that I could absorb, understand, most any variety of Chinese as long as it's a form of Mandarin.

This is a long story that we don't need to go into in any detail, because it's just another Gee-whiz, boys! great excitement stuff.

Levenson: One thing I'd like to ask is--maps were always an enormous problem in the Pacific area I know. What was the reliability or availability of maps from any source for these areas?

J. SERVICE: Very poor. We didn't have any good maps. Even the air force didn't. We had general maps, but they didn't show things like roads. Of course, we had to get Chinese permission. From each province we would get the maps. There were little maps, extremely primitive and sketchy. They didn't show very much in detail.

We each had a jeep. They fixed up trailers, and we carried two drums of gas. The trailer had an iron box built on it, to enclose it in other words so there was some security.

We spent two months traveling around on these mostly forsaken, empty, abandoned roads. Sometimes the grass had grown up higher than the jeep. We had to push through it. Bridges sometimes were gone. We got across by getting local sampans, sometimes by putting boards across two sampans and then running the jeep out onto the boards and maneuvering the sampans, tied together, across the river.

We did southern Yunnan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi [gesturing], in other words all the arc around the northern borders of Indo-china. We went right up to the border. In several places we could see the Japanese posts on the other side.

LEVENSON: Did they bother you ever?

J. SERVICE: No they didn't. We were foreigners. The whole frontier was completely inactive, and the Chinese weren't about to let it be otherwise. They weren't anxious to stir up anything.

Generally, we traveled alone, but in Kwangsi at one place, we were escorted by some young Kwangsi army officers.

[249]

J. SERVICE: This was the most interesting part of the trip, as far as I was concerned, to talk with the Kwangsi people. Later on I wrote a report about Chiang Kai-shek's treatment of the Kwangsi clique. It's partly from my experience.

I think that the trip was valuable to me; I was seeing a whole, other, big new section of the country. I'd done the northwest, and this was seeing the southwest. If there was no town, we stayed in a farmer's home, in villages. We'd simply find the head man and say, "Here we are. Can you help us?" We had papers identifying us.

LEVENSON: How were you received?

J. SERVICE: Friendly. [pause] Well, let's not get into that.

Some Adventures

LEVENSON: What were you going to say?

J. SERVICE: No, no .

LEVENSON: Go ahead.

J. SERVICE: I was going to tell the story about having my gun stolen, but that's not particularly important.

LEVENSON: You were armed then?

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. We carried a carbine each and a Colt forty-five, for bandits and so on. We were under orders not to put up the side curtains on the jeeps, because the idea was that if enemy planes came over, the side curtains would make it harder to get out and we might not hear them.

The jeep tires were these big-tooth tires, and all the roads were earth-bound macadam. It was drizzling and raining most of the time, in Kweichow province particularly. The tires churned up a fine mud spray, and we used to pick it off behind our ears. We'd get all muddy behind the ears, [laughing] simply covered with mud! We had army coverall things. Wet and cold, it was just absolutely miserable.

[250]

J. SERVICE: My trailer slipped off the road going around one curve, which had a reverse banking on it. I could feel it going. It's just like a crack of the whip. It just swung around and started to swing off the road and then began to pull me backward. I was cramping my wheels. Finally, I got pulled off the road except that my front wheel caught a tree and hung up there with my trailer hanging off down the bank at the rear and my front wheel locked on this tree.

I jumped out and fired my pistol three times, which was supposed to be the distress signal, but the other jeep was too far ahead, and he didn't hear. So, I was sitting there and pretty soon there wasn't much traffic on this road--pretty soon a sedan came along which was very unusual.

I was waving my arms and who should be in the sedan but a party of Chinese and American doctors who were on some sort of inspection trip, and the doctor was Dr. Claude Forkner who'd been my brother's physician when he was in the PUMC in 1933 with tuberculosis! [chuckle] Forkner, as a war job, had come out to China to help one of their relief organizations.

Anyway, they gave the word to my companions in the next town. So, they came back and we got about twenty farmers and eventually pulled the trailer up and pulled me up.

The next town was Mao Tai, which is quite famous. It was also New Year's Eve. We celebrated New Year's Eve with these other doctors in Mao Tai which is the home of a famous Chinese brew, you know.

LEVENSON: Did you have training in your firearms?

J. SERVICE: I'd had a little bit. I knew how to pull the trigger! The only time I really fired the thing was when we were in a place called Nanning in Kwangsi province. There was a small satellite, emergency field there that was used by the Fourteenth Air Force. We stayed there overnight. In the early morning a couple of Japanese fighters came in and dive-bombed the field and some of the buildings there. Our air raid precautions were simply to run off to a hillside nearby covered with grave mounds. We lay down between the grave mounds and peppered away with our carbines and anything else [laughing] we had at these planes. But, we didn't do any damage.

LEVENSON: When did you have your gun stolen?

[251]

J. SERVICE: The other car got stuck in the mud. The road conditions were awful. The other jeep was stuck in the mud, so I stopped. We had metal holders for the carbines right beside the driver's seat. Our guns were always there. While I was trying to help the other guy get out, a bunch of conscripts came by, a couple of hundred men under armed escort.

Just after they'd gone by I noticed that my gun holder was empty. So, I ran down the road as fast as I could and got to the head of the column and told the officer what had happened, that my gun had been stolen.

At first he wasn't very much concerned. "How do you know we did it?" I said, "It was there just before you came, and now it's not there, so it's got to be somebody in this group." So he made all the men squat. No gun appeared. Theoretically, squatting should have revealed the gun. He said, "Obviously, we don't have it."

So, I said, "Well, it's very important." We were near some large town in Kweichow, and I told him where we would be staying there, and if he got any information or found out anything to let me know. He could contact me where we would be.

Darned if the next morning they didn't call up and say they had my gun. The local headquarters called up. It turned out one of the officers had taken it. They didn't make the officers squat.

LEVENSON: I'm surprised you got it back!

J. SERVICE: There was one shot missing. So I mentioned the fact that the shot was missing. They said--whether or not to be believed--that that took care of the guy that stole it. I think I'd take that with a considerable grain of salt. [laughter] I think somebody shot it just to see what it was like.

Trips to India and Sian

J. SERVICE: There were various other trips I made. Soon after I joined Stilwell's staff, John Davies took me on a tour of the theater. We went down to India and met people in the headquarters there and then up into Assam which was the Indian end of the "Hump Jump." We saw the early work--they were just beginning the Stilwell road and building and enlarging the Assam bases where planes took off for China over the Hump.

[252]

LEVENSON: How were Allied relations? Were problems occurring with the British at that point?

J. SERVICE: Well, relations were good, I think. The Americans were in a hell of a hurry, and they just felt that the British didn't work as hard as they would like them to. There was always a lot of griping about slow pace of things in India. The Americans finally took over the operation of the railway from Calcutta. Stuff would come into Calcutta by sea and then had to be hauled way up the river, Brahmaputra River, up to Assam. There was a rail line and a barge line for hauling stuff up the river to Assam.

The British had really a tough situation. The Congress party was against the war. The only party in India that was favoring the war was the Communist party.

LEVENSON: Was there strong American anti-colonial feeling that created friction with the British?

J. SERVICE: I would say by and large that the average American attitude was anti-colonial, yes, although it wasn't terribly pro-Indian either, because the Indians were not, you know, the most lovable people. They were querulous. I think that there was criticism of the Indians for not being willing to get in and fight.

When it came to the training camps that were set up for the Chinese at Ramgarh, British cooperation was very good. I don't think there were any complaints there. They simply put at our disposal some of their own camps. This sort of cooperation was very satisfactory.

I made another trip in the spring of '44 up to Sian in Shensi province, which was the headquarters of the Kuomintang forces blockading the Communist area. Hu Chung-nan's headquarters. The Communist representatives in Chungking were very alarmed because they were convinced that the Kuomintang was going to try to make some sort of a preemptive strike on the Yen-an base area.

I don't know what their evidence was, but it's very noticeable for instance in this book that's been written by Vladimirov, the Russian Comintern representative in Yen-an, that they were alarmed. The Chinese Communists wanted us to show some concern. The headquarters approved my going up to Sian.

This was one trip where I did not avoid Chinese officials. I interviewed them and talked to them in Sian and inquired about troop movements and the political situation. It was quite

[253]

J. SERVICE: obvious that the headquarters was concerned that there not be another New Fourth Route Army incident or anything like that.

LEVENSON: How were you received?

J. SERVICE: Politely, correctly. [chuckling] There was no real welcome.

LEVENSON: Did you feel you made an impact?

J. SERVICE: Oh, yes. I certainly registered headquarters' concern. They knew who I was, of course. I was traveling under official orders.

"Doing What Came Naturally": Full Time Political Reporter for G-2

J. SERVICE: I got back to Chungking in February of '44, I guess. By this time I think it was quite obvious that what I was best fit for, and certainly what I most wanted to do, was to be a political reporter. As I said earlier, doing what comes naturally.

Also, there had been a new chief of G-2, [Joseph Kingsley Dickey] who was a Japan language man, and more sophisticated in some ways than young Stilwell. Perhaps because he didn't have a China background was more interested, or recognized the need for political background. I don't know.

Anyway, he was quite content to let me make my own job. We worked out a good system, quite satisfactory for me. He and I would have a conference very early every morning, eight or eight thirty. I had a small office in one of the headquarters buildings, with a typewriter. I'd usually go to my office and do some writing and then just take off. The rest of the day I was completely my own man.

I had been living up to this time in military quarters, barracks really, which wasn't very satisfactory, sharing a room with at least one other officer, with no real place where I could entertain or bring Chinese. It was very difficult to bring Chinese to the mess.

My very good friend Sol [Solomon] Adler, who was the U.S. Treasury Attaché and also the American member of the Stabilization Board, lived in downtown Chungking. The army headquarters was quite a bit out from the center of town in a new area that had

[254]

J. SERVICE: grown up during the war. Adler lived in a foreign-style three-story house owned by H.H. Kung, who was the head of the Bank of China and also the head Chinese member of the Stabilization Board.

The ground floor apartment was given to the British member. The second floor was Adler's. In the third floor was a man named Chi [Ch'ao-ting], who was the Chinese member. He was an adviser to Kung, and the man that did the technical work on the board, and functioned as a secretary.

Adler had two bedrooms on his floor. He said, "Come on down and stay with me," which was perfect. So I did that. From then on I would usually have breakfast at Adler's and then lunch and dinner every day with whoever I was with. I might make appointments or look up people.

A Wide Range of Contacts

J. SERVICE: My contacts were numerous and various. People talk now about how you never got into the homes of Chinese in the old days. Chinese don't live in a way that they can entertain foreigners very well. Certainly in China in those days they were living in a very, very crowded, ramshackle way.

But I was continually in these people's rooms, their lodgings, just as they came to me. We got on a basis of very intimate equality, so that I could drop around and see them and we'd spend evenings talking where they lived. We usually went out for meals because even for Chinese [chuckle], it's easier to go out and get a snack--perhaps even at a noodle stand--than eat at home. And they weren't set up for entertaining. Most of my meals were in restaurants. Occasionally I would have supper with Adler, but very seldom.

I mentioned last time moving in with Sol Adler, and I think we ought to say something more about that, because I had become by this time very close friends with Adler. He had come out to Chungking for the Treasury Department in the summer of 1941. So he'd been a long time in Chungking.

A brilliant person, he'd worked for a long time in the government, in the treasury, was a very close associate of Harry Dexter White. A brilliant economist, an international

[255]

J. SERVICE: chess master, a terrific bridge player. Just a very, very keen, sharp mind who was as interested in Chinese politics as I was and in what was happening in China and how it would affect us.

He knew no Chinese, but all his associates were Chinese. He was an economist in the treasury working with Dr. Kung and with the Ministry of Finance and with the government economists and the top government bankers in China, so that he tapped an entirely different layer from what I was reaching. We compared notes and worked together very closely, so that my moving to a room in his apartment on the second floor was more than just convenience. It facilitated our own collaboration, which really is the right word to use, on a lot of the reporting that I did.

Things like my comments on, oh, the Generalissimo's book, *China's Destiny*, a lot of it came indirectly from Adler, from his contacts, and particularly from his friend and very close associate Chi Ch'ao-ting, who was a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University and whose book *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History*, I think was one of the best known books in Chinese economic history at that time.

Then the Generalissimo came out with semi-secret publication. It was not published in China, but it was a textbook for all the party schools on Chinese economic theory. This actually was translated by Chi and then Sol wrote a long comment on it, economic analysis of it, and I gave it to the embassy, to Davies. Chi's translation was the origin of the eventual English publication.

LEVENSON: Did the Generalissimo write it himself?

J. SERVICE: No. Chungking was convinced, and I think it was fairly well accepted, that the person who wrote it was a man named T'ao Hsi-sheng, who was a sort of a secretary, a member of the

Generalissimo's inner secretariat. He was an extreme conservative, right-wing, traditionalist Chinese scholar.

There were a whole lot of foreigners in Chungking working one way or another in intelligence or intelligence related work. This was the period that I first met John [King] Fairbank. He came to Chungking with what was called the COI [coordinator of information], which then became, or was part of OSS. John was running their office and did a great deal of work collecting printed materials on China.

[256]

J. SERVICE: Fairbank had spent four years in Peking while he was working for his Ph.D. and had done some teaching at Tsing Hua University. As a result of that and because of his own interests and Harvard work and so on, he had a very, very extensive acquaintance among Chinese university circles.

I saw the people in the embassy, like Sprouse, of course. Most of the embassy contacts were government officials, particularly foreign office but other government--the ministry of economics and so on. We all did a lot of comparing of notes.

There was a man in the headquarters named Linebarger, who had been the psychological warfare guy that had asked for the original long compendium on morale and propaganda agencies. He eventually was sent to Chungking as a captain attached to G-2. Because of his father's connections with Sun Yat-sen and because of his own predilections, he had a direct contact with people like T'ao Hsi-sheng and Tai Chi-t'ao, and most of the conservative groups of the KMT.

There were other OWI people like Fisher, Stuart and others, who had been in China a long time.

Also there was a very active press contingent, the permanent group. I'm not thinking of the visitors who came in for a week and left. I talked to them of course. People like Sevareid came at that time, and Raymond Clapper. Various people. You remember, this was one of the things that Currie wanted me to do. He undoubtedly told these people to look me up. Perhaps they would have anyway. I don't know.

The residents were people like Gunther Stein, Brooks Atkinson, Richard Watts, who was there for the *Herald Tribune*. Brooks Atkinson was the long-time drama critic of the *Times*. He was there for the *New York Times*. He didn't want to write drama criticism during the war. He asked for a war job, and they sent him to Chungking. It was a coincidence that Richard Watts, also a drama critic, was the *Herald Tribune* man in Chungking .

Teddy White, and with him was Anna Lee Jacoby. Harold Isaacs was there later on for *Newsweek*. These people were interested in exactly the same sort of thing I was interested in. They were able to talk to a lot of people I couldn't see.

LEVENSON: Why couldn't you?

[257]

J. SERVICE: Because I was not given prominent status in headquarters as political representative or adviser. In other words, I wasn't given big face. If I had been treated that way, as Davies was much more in India, then it would have been more possible for me to ask to see T.V. Soong or someone like that, the head of the government. John could go and talk to Nehru, or he could talk to the governor-general.

I preferred it this way. I much preferred to operate the way I did, than to have been put at a desk in a big office. It really didn't hamper me a great deal. Having good relations with the press, they often let me know before they were having an important interview.

LEVENSON: So, you could feed in your questions.

J. SERVICE: "I'm going to see so and so. What do you think?" Then, I would read their notes afterward. In many cases I read their despatches and could read what was censored. I was on a basis of friendly cooperation with some of these correspondents. They were tapping, you see, still a different stratum, than I was tapping.

We were all living and breathing the politics of Chungking. We shared both ways. If I knew something, if I had some rumor I was trying to check out, I shared with them. None of this material was about American policy, what the American government was going to do, military plans. It was all about what was happening in front of our eyes in China, so that although all these things were classified, we got out of the habit of thinking of them as classified, or at least I did.

Levenson: We know subsequently that many of these people to whom you've referred have taken very different positions on American-China policy. I'm talking about people who are now, to put it in seventies terms, pro-Taiwan or pro-PRC [People's Republic of China]. Was there any evidence of splits at that time or any personal friction?

J. SERVICE: No, not really. We were beginning to get a difference of attitude toward the Communists. At this time--I'm talking about before I actually went to Yen-an--most of us didn't know much about it. No one knew much about what really was happening up there.

Isaacs, I think, always from the very beginning was critical of the Communists. He himself had had a political background in China. He'd been there as a young man editing a magazine which was regarded as being Trotskyite. He asked Trotsky to

[258]

J. SERVICE: write the foreward to his book on China. He regarded Mao Tse-tung, I think wrongly--his anger should have been at Wang Ming and the twenty-eight Bolsheviks--but he regarded him as a tool of Stalin. He was very anti-Stalin.

There were some people working for the Chinese, people like "Mo" [Maurice] Votaw, who was working as an editor for the Chinese Ministry of Information, which as I mentioned before was a party ministry. Mo was restrained in his criticism, shall we say. He didn't try to pretend everything in China was hunky-dory. There were some differences, but by and large we all were talking about what's happening here, and we all saw it pretty much the same way.

Later on, when the Kuomintang started putting out prejudicial information, they made a good deal out of my contacts with some of the press, particularly Teddy White. They even claimed that I used to use his room in the press hostel for assignations with Chou En-lai's lady press secretary, a woman named Kung Peng.

This, of course, was absurd to anybody who knew the layout of the press hostel, because the press hostel purposely was laid out to facilitate surveillance. It was like a two-story motel, built around two sides of a square. The third side of the square was a dining room, and then at the entrance you all had to go through one gate.

The entrance was where your surveillant sat, the policeman. The doors of all the rooms opened out onto balconies, verandas, so that he could sit there and watch whoever went into any door. So the idea that I would pick this place for assignations is somewhat laughable. But, we'll come back to this subject.

Kung Peng was famous in Chungking. She was a graduate of an American missionary school and Yenching University, had been active in the student movement there in 1935, and went over to the Communist side. Her first husband was killed fighting in the guerrilla areas. Her second husband was a man I knew quite well, who had escaped from Hong Kong after Pearl Harbor and was one of the editors of the Communist paper in Chungking.

He became ill, had an operation, and I found out that she was very distraught because the hospital needed blood and they couldn't get it. Chinese, at that time, weren't used to the idea of giving blood. They somehow think it's their life essence, and they just don't like the idea of having people take it away.

So I went down to the hospital to give blood. My veins are very hard to find apparently. I'm very thin, the doctors were not in practice, I'm sure, and the needles were very old.

[259]

J. SERVICE: Anyway, they had to probe around so long and make so many futile attempts [chuckling] that I finally passed out cold as a flounder, which alarmed everybody, except me of course. But at any rate, this example encouraged Chinese comrades, and he got a good supply of blood after that. Also, I was able to get him plasma from our army doctor up at headquarters, plasma and antibiotics which they needed desperately. He's the man who later became foreign minister.

LEVENSON: His name?

J. SERVICE: Ch'iao Kuan-hua. He was a foreign minister until, unfortunately, he got mixed up with the Gang of Four. His wife had died some years ago. He remarried and his new wife, who was a vice-minister of foreign affairs, apparently was quite close to Chiang Ch'ing.

People often assume, you know, that intelligence is a matter of paying money and so on. I think it's clear that the type of work I was doing was not at all with paid informants. It was all friendly, people who had the same interests that I did.

The Chinese newspapermen who were the primary people that I talked to, and the Communists were

all interested in what was going on, all interested in talking shop, exchanging ideas, pumping each other. Mostly it was friendship. Of course, some people talked to me because of my position. Obviously, my position was an advantage. People knew I worked for headquarters. Some people wanted to influence me, wanted to get their ideas through to headquarters. People like Feng Yu-hsiang and some government people tried to talk to me at various times, convince me of their views or change my views.

But basically, it was simply a matter of common interest. When we went out I very often paid for meals, but that was not exactly bribery. Most of these people were working for a pittance themselves. When I left Chungking I gave away everything I had practically-- this was normal, pretty much--gave away clothes, pens, watches, anything like that. But it was not as payment for information received. They would resent that if it was ever suggested that I was bribing them.

Informal Liaison with the American Embassy: Files Kept at Army Headquarters

J. SERVICE: When I started working for the army it was understood, and I think agreed, that I would give copies of everything I wrote to the embassy and send a copy of it to John Davies, who was the senior of the political adviser group. He'd come out with Stilwell when Stilwell first came to China in '42.

[260]

LEVENSON: He was then headquartered in Delhi?

J. SERVICE: He spent most of the time in Delhi. He occasionally made trips to Chungking, but after I was in Chungking, he came much less frequently because there wasn't perhaps the need. Of course a copy went to headquarters, and then I kept a copy.

These were all typed by myself on a small portable typewriter. I kept all the files--what files there were were all at headquarters in my little office there. I never kept anything down at Adler's. I might have a notebook which I usually kept with things that were going on, that sort of thing. But, I didn't keep any reports, any typing, or anything like that down at Adler's.

Davies had by this time been with Stilwell for quite a while. He'd made trips with Stilwell back to the States. He went with Stilwell to the Cairo conference. So he had met a good many of the people in Washington, Hopkins--Currie, of course, he'd known well. He'd acted as a guide for Currie, I think, on both Currie's trips to China.

John had met several senators, and like Currie's approach to me, all these people were anxious to develop contacts, develop their own sources of information. So John was encouraged to keep them informed, to keep in contact. I think Stilwell himself realized John was extremely valuable, a press agent for him in a sense, an advocate for Stilwell's point of view.

The CBI theater had differences and problems. I've already alluded to some with the British, particularly in Burma and the Burma campaign in '42 and so on, when there was some friction with the British. We had, of course, plenty of disagreements with Chinese, and we were being attacked, shall we say, by Chennault, with Chinese connivance, with the Fourteenth Air Force point of view.

Circulation of Reports

J. SERVICE: John did high level informational work of a sort from New Delhi. Copies of reports that I sent to him, if he thought them of interest, were retyped and then sent on to Washington. A lot of them got to Currie. Some of them went to other people.

Headquarters would send some things in, but not very much. I don't think headquarters was terribly interested. They were much more interested in what they were doing rather than sending

[261]

J. SERVICE: stuff to Washington. That's why JICA [Joint Intelligence Collection Agency] was set up partly. They would send some things in.

Generally I didn't know what headquarters or Davies or the embassy sent to Washington. When stuff did get to Washington, if it was of interest to the receiving office, they might make copies. They would duplicate it. I've got several copies, for instance, of a memorandum that I wrote with the collaboration of Adler for Wallace's visit, the June 20 thing. This obviously was greatly welcomed and, shall we say, found of interest in Washington. So, apparently copies were made, typed copies, and we can see differences in the different versions.

Classification of Documents

LEVENSON: I know that you've made this point a number of times in a number of forums. But, were these papers automatically classified?

J. SERVICE: Oh yes, of course. Everything was classified. It's hard to really explain why they were quote, "classified." They classified them because we were criticizing Chinese officials. Therefore, it was not something you wanted your Chinese officials to see. It was something that should be only used in background.

A document had to be classified to get prompt handling. Even if it got in the pouch, which would be unlikely for unclassified, when it reached the destination, why, no one was really going to pay much attention to it if it was unclassified. There were all sorts of these subjective reasons for classification.

When I was having my hearings in Washington we were able to have temporary use of copies of many of my reports. We found cases where even though I'd put a low classification on them, the receiving agency had changed the classification. I would put what I thought was a reasonable classification, generally confidential or something like that. But then the agency that transmitted it might put a different classification on it, higher. They might make it secret. I didn't know that, you see.

There was over-classification, particularly since a lot of this stuff had only timely value. What happened yesterday is of no great importance two or three days later if it's already become public in speeches and so on.

[262]

J. SERVICE: I was on very good terms with a lot of people, so they would talk to me. Perhaps their confidence should be protected, Mme. Sun [Yat-sen] and so on. That should be protected. I would be informed sometimes that something was going to happen, but when it had happened it was no longer confidential.

The Democratic League, for instance, was going to put out some sort of a manifesto. This was a group of modern democratic parties. I was regarded as friendly and sympathetic. This was one way of getting people to confide in you, but in my case it was genuine and quite sincere. I didn't have to put on much of an act.

So, their man in Chungking was brought to me to ask me to check the translation, to see if I could improve the translation they were going to put out in English. They wanted to get maximum publicity. I made some note of this, I'm sure, some report, of the fact that this was coming out. But, of course, after it came out it was hardly confidential.

What was confidential was the fact that the person who brought this Democratic League representative to me was my very close, good friend, Chen Chia-k'ang, who was Chou En-lai's secretary. That was a matter of some political interest that they were working that closely with the Communists, that a man from Chou En-lai's office would have brought him around to me for improving the translation.

[Interview 8: October 3, 1977]

J. SERVICE: When I left Yen-an in 1944, the Communists knew I was going back to Washington, and so Yeh Chien-ying, the chief of staff, presented me just before I left with this wonderful great big ma--about three by five feet I think it was of all the north China guerrilla areas, beautifully done.

I noted he had no classification on it, and I said specifically to him, "Well now, General Yeh, is there any classification on this?"

"No classification at all! The Japanese know where we are."

So, I took it to Washington. Of course, I was asked in my usual process of debriefings to go over to military, to G-2 in the Pentagon. Everywhere I went I had the map. I rolled out the map. "Oh, very interesting. Can we borrow the map?"

I said, "Well, don't keep it very long because after all I need this." [chuckling] So, they promised, I think, to return it to me the next day. They were going to reproduce it.

[263]

J. SERVICE: The next day when I got back it was all plastered with "confidential." I protested.

"Well," they said, "we've got to classify it because it shows where friendly troops are." It showed Kuomintang areas. But, this was a map of north China on a scale of perhaps one in two or three million. It was no good for artillery fire or anything like that. It was just general approximations, ten miles or twenty miles, something like that. "But, it shows our Allied troops, so we have to classify it."

I was thus barred officially, legally, from using that map any more in my briefings and talks around Washington.

LEVENSON: In your presentations and debriefings to government people.

J. SERVICE: It was okay in classified groups and meetings. But I used it anyway, and to the press. Officially I was violating the regulations.

But, exactly the same map was published in a book written by Harrison Forman who was one of the correspondents in China at the time. He was given the same map, and it s a full-page spread in Harrison Forman's book, which was published not too long after this in 1945 (Harrison Forman, *Report from Red China*, New York, Holland Company, 1945). .

LEVENSON: Once something is published, as in Forman's book, what sort of legal penalties can lie against somebody for using that? Even if the document that you yourself carried to Washington has been classified, doesn't it then enter the public domain?

J. SERVICE: Yes, I would say logically, but you know, they would argue that after all reproduction of this map in a book of one page is very different from having the original hand drawn three by five foot original. This wouldn't necessarily get you off the hook if they wanted to make a point of it.

A very important point, of course, in all my hearings, was the confidentiality of the information that I gave as background to the press and to Jaffe particularly. The Loyalty Review Board said, "After all, some of this is only six weeks old. It's pretty hot stuff." It wasn't pretty hot stuff.

[264]

Val

J. SERVICE: As one might expect, with most of my friends and associates being Chinese, I fell in love at this point with a Chinese woman. No particular apologies. It was not surprising perhaps. She was attractive. There were no American, and almost no Caucasian women in Chungking. I did it in a wholehearted way, probably unwisely. I told the ambassador about it. Sol was willing to let her move in, and so she simply moved in, lived at Adler's with me for several months. I wrote to Caroline and asked for a divorce, which she did not want to agree to.

This was a period when I got a tremendous amount of work done. I was in a kind of exhilaration, I think, partly with being in love but partly just the excitement of friends and events. I met literary and theater people through her. We used to be invited together. It was well known that we were friends. I was warned from both sides that she probably was a dangerous person, which to my mind meant that she probably wasn't, since each side thought she was probably working for the other side.

LEVENSON: When you talk about sides, who do you mean?

J. SERVICE: Kuomintang and Communist.

LEVENSON: What was Gauss reaction?

J. SERVICE: Gauss reaction was, "Well, don't be a damn fool." You don't need to talk about marrying the woman, in other words, was his attitude. "Why give up your marriage and probably your career?" --because it would have meant probably giving up my career in the Foreign Service. I couldn't say that he approved but at least he said, "Don't be public about it." [machine off]

LEVENSON: You mentioned to me when the tape recorder was off that she was a prominent actress.

J. SERVICE: Yes, well, she was I would say fairly prominent. She was one of the three or four top actresses in Chungking. Through her I met an awful lot of people that I otherwise probably wouldn't have met, theatrical world, playwrights and so on. She was quite well known and I actually was invited to some of the high Kuomintang officials' homes with her.

It was an affair that did not affect the State Department, but it became involved in my affairs later on in other quarters of the State Department. Do we want to discuss that now?

[265]

Levenson: We could talk about that either now or later.

J. SERVICE: It seems to me it's so out of chronology now that it would be confusing to do it now.

LEVENSON: Yes. It obviously helped your work in a number of directions. Did it impair your work, say, in relation to your missionary contacts?

J. SERVICE: This is hard to know. I don't think so, because my missionary contacts in Chungking were not at all important. Missionary contacts were generally on the road, out of Chungking. When I say everybody knew about it, I doubt if the missionaries--[laughing] The missionaries, they may not have known about it, since we moved in somewhat different circles normally.

Chungking Duties

J. SERVICE: I spoke of seeing the chief of G2 every day. I saw the chief of staff fairly often. The army gave me other jobs to do. I may have given the impression last time, that I spent all my time running around loose in Chungking.

I was asked to report on certain topics that the army may have been interested in. One was the incident up in Sinkiang on the border there, which I wrote a number of reports about. We can make footnotes to them (Esherick, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-129).

I was often asked by G-2 to comment on other intelligence reports [chuckling] they received, particularly from the military attaché. The military attaché was very prone to accept at face value stuff that was fed to him by the Chinese, so that I occasionally had to prick those balloons.

I did some commenting on reports by people at OWI and so on.

LEVENSON: What were the relations between the various American intelligence services in Chungking?

[266]

J. SERVICE: G-2 tried to do some coordination. But, really there wasn't very much. As I mentioned before, they finally had to set up a special agency and send out a man from Washington to run it. It was called the Joint Intelligence Collection Agency, JICA. But he didn't have any great rank and he didn't have any power. It was simply persuasion.

Political reporting is one form of intelligence, but we think of it as political reporting rather than intelligence in the covert sense. People who worked for the Office of War Information would send in reports on conditions they observed in their traveling in the eastern part of China.

Graham Peck for instance was a remarkable guy who was spending most of his time in Kweilin. He was an artist, a writer. He'd done several excellent books on China. He got very close to Chinese, much the same way I did. But he was more limited by being in a particular environment. Kweilin was a center of intellectuals, many of them escapees from Hong Kong, anti-Kuomintang artists, and some of the people who were in the various dissident groups, some of them Democratic League, some of them Kwangsi military clique and so on.

He expected too much of the political significance of these people. We're all, you know, victims more or less of the people we know. Your reporting is as good as your contacts, as I said before. I was fortunate in a sense in being in a more metropolitan place, but also in being able to tap various different groups.

Ranked as Colonel

J. SERVICE: This traveling for the army used to raise some questions. At first the army was very casual. They would just say go off and do this or that. Then I found I had to have a little more identification, because the question came, "Mr. Service, what and who the hell are you?"

Boarding planes, they'd start with the highest ranking officer, colonel and then major, captain, lieutenant, sergeant, then private first class, then privates, and then Mr. Service at the end. [laughter]

At any rate, I had army orders, which I didn't always want to pull out. But, I got an identification. Let me show it to you here. Do you want to turn the machine off?

[266a]

FORWARD ECHELON HEADQUARTERS U.S. ARMY FORCES CHINA, BURMA AND INDIA

19 July, 1944

CERTIFICATE

The bearer, JOHN S. SERVICE, whose signature and photograph appear below, is hereby certified to be a Second Secretary of Embassy and Consul of the United States of America, assigned to the

American Embassy at Chungking and detailed to the staff of the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in China, Burma and India, and as such staff officer, in event of capture by the enemy is entitled to be treated as a prisoner of war, and that he will be given the same treatment, afforded the same privileges as an Officer in the Army of the United States of the grade of COLONEL, and receive compensation at the same rate as a COLONEL in the army of the detaining power.

By command of Lieutenant General STILLWELL:

EDWIN M. CAHILL
Lt. Col., A.G.D.
Asst. Adjutant General

(Signature)

[267]

LEVENSON: Sure. [tape off]

I think we should have this in the manuscript, rank of colonel.

J. SERVICE: Well actually, I wasn't terribly satisfied with that, but-- [laughter]

LEVENSON: How old were you then?

J. SERVICE: Nineteen forty-four, I was thirty- five, not quite, I was still thirty-four at that time.

The question of garb eventually came up. At first they didn't care what we wore. This was typical of the theater. It was not very much on spit and polish, as you can imagine. Stilwell scorned such stuff. But, finally they decided that we should wear GI clothing. There was a patch that you wear on your shoulder [gesturing on left shoulder], triangular patch, showing that you're a civilian attached to the armed forces, and we wore that, just ordinary GI clothes. So, the pictures that were taken of me in Yen-an, for instance, always show me wearing that army uniform, but it had no insignia.

The B-29 Bases in Chengtu

J. SERVICE: During this period I made several trips for headquarters. One was to Chengtu. There were rumors of anti-American feeling there because of the huge bases that were being built for the B-29s. We hadn't yet got far enough in the Pacific to try them out against Japan from Pacific airfields. We hadn't taken Saipan and Tinian yet.

Somebody dreamed up the idea that we'd build bases in west China, from which we could reach Manchuria and the southern tip of Japan, Kyushu and so on. It was done, of course, without any thought of the economic cost, or the problems and disturbance it would cause in China. It was pushed ahead as things were then when the top decided on it.

Large areas of most fertile farm land, rice paddies in the center of the rich Chengtu plain, were taken over for these huge bases. Hundreds of thousands of people were dislocated. Hundreds of thousands of people had to be mobilized to build them.

[268]

J. SERVICE: There were some incidents there. I was sent up by Stilwell to try to find out what it was all about. This was what I was alluding to a while ago, that it was something that I was able to do almost completely without contacting the [Chinese] official sources, because, of course, they would have their own story.

I talked to some local Chinese YMCA people, and through them met some local Szechwanese people, business people, newspaper people, and so on.

I actually went out to see one of the bases, talked to some of the farmers. I wrote a series of reports on it, and I mentioned a number of things that could be done. One problem was that Chengtu had been bombed very heavily early in the war because it had been a base for some of the Russian planes, that the Russians gave, early, 1937, '38. There had been an aviation school set up there, and the Japanese came and bombed it quite heavily. So the populace, very practically and from long experience, were sure that big bomber bases would provoke Japanese retaliation.

One thing I reported that could be done would be to send some Fourteenth Air Force planes up there, detach them temporarily. This was one of the things that Stilwell headquarters fixed on. So they instructed Chennault to send some fighters to Chengtu.

Chennault found out that I was responsible, and this was apparently one of his real big complaints about me, was that I--[quickly and emphatically] "Amateurs that know nothing at all about it making these recommendations!" He deals with this, I think, in his book (Claire Lee Chennault, *Way of a Fighter: The Memoirs of Claire Lee Chennault*, ed. Robert Hotz, New York, G. P. Putnam Sons, 1949.).

[Vice-President Henry] Wallace was coming to China. I think Adler suggested that it would be good to do a briefing paper for him. I worked on a long report which has been published very extensively, a June 20th memo I think, which was really for Wallace. I'm not sure that Wallace read it, but the State Department got it and it got very wide circulation in the department (Esherick, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-157).

[269]

VIII THE DIXIE MISSION: YENAN, 1944

Permission Granted for an American Military Mission to Communist Headquarters

J. SERVICE: All this time we had been working on the question of getting permission to go to Yen-an. I don't think we want to go into a history of all that. [Colonel David] Barrett (David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: the United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944*, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1970.) has written some of it and a lot of other people have written books on the Dixie Mission. It can be dug out.

When Wallace was coming we thought that this would be a good time to try to make one more try. We drafted a message referring to various earlier messages. The White House had earlier sent a request, which the Chinese had agreed to. They would let us go to north China, any areas under Kuomintang control. Of course this was not what we wanted.

Anyway, we drafted a message to the War Department for [General George] Marshall summing up all this and suggesting that Wallace's visit would be a good time for a push. We got a message back which, as I recall, simply said that the White House had agreed that our message could be given to Chiang Kai-shek as being from the White House. In other words, all we had to do was to change the head and tail, you see, and say that this was from the White House.

We were elated at this, but it turned out that that morning--Wallace was already in town-- that very morning Chiang Kai-shek had agreed. Apparently he decided that this was something he was going to be hit with. So, he'd agreed without being pushed on it.

[270]

J. SERVICE: Well at any rate, this was a message which had to be delivered and we wanted to discuss details, so I was summoned with the chief of staff, who was General [Benjamin Greeley] Ferris, up to the embassy where Wallace was having lunch. We discussed tactics for the afternoon meeting. We arrived out at the Generalissimo's and said that this message had come in, and although it wasn't necessary we wanted him to know that the president thought this very important. But, all this is in *Foreign Relations*._

LEVENSON: What was your impression of Wallace?

J. SERVICE: I was quite impressed. In a small group like this, he was very quick on the uptake, very intelligent, quite well informed. He was very good on absorbing all the details and deciding what was the best way. He would say this, we would say this, and so on. He carried it off very well. I mean he functioned beautifully. He had some fuzzy and wild ideas, and I couldn't support him in his run for the president. But when it came to an administrative sort of thing, he was awfully good.

LEVENSON: How did Chiang Kai-shek respond?

J. SERVICE: Like a stick of wood, impassive. They were very surprised when we walked in. Madame showed her surprise at seeing me there. I was there with Ferris, you see. They had expected Wallace. He was due to come out for that afternoon meeting, and Vincent was traveling with him and Lattimore. We were two extra people that they hadn't expected.

She walked into the room. Hollington Tong whom I mentioned before, was there to interpret. She was a bit surprised, and then we explained why we were there. After we'd finished this, Ferris and I withdrew. We weren't there for the last part of the talk.

LEVENSON: Was she at this point hostile to you, do you think?

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. By this time they had already decided that I was not a friend. I'd been interpreter when Ferris had to deliver the first messages about putting Stilwell in command of Chinese troops. I had been an interpreter on two sessions, where it was supposed to be "Eyes Alone," which meant that we asked the other people to withdraw. I think the Chiangs by this time had a [chuckling] pretty good idea that I was one of the pushers on this business--I made no particular bones of it--getting up there to Yen-an. That was an unfriendly act as far as they were concerned.

[271]

LEVENSON: Do you want to comment at all on those "Eyes Alone" meetings, or do you feel that's been covered adequately?

J. SERVICE: There's masses of it in the hearings I think.

I don't think there's much need to talk about Yen-an or plans for Yen-an. I had earlier on had a talk with Stilwell and suggested that the logical man to go was Barrett, and Stilwell agreed.

When we got permission then we immediately canvassed the various operating agencies in the theater to see if they wanted to be represented the Twentieth Bomber Command, the people in Chengtu, the B-29s, the Fourteenth Air Force, the OSS of course. Then there were various OSS groups that were put under Fourteenth Air Force, air ground rescue service, and photo, something like photo--and specialists that the Fourteenth Air Force didn't have that OSS was able to supply.

Fourteenth Air Force would not officially send anybody to join our group, because Chennault was playing the Chiang Kai-shek game. He wasn't going to do anything that would complicate his relations with Chiang Kai-shek.

Impressions of Yen-an: Confidence, Friendliness, and Efficiency

J. SERVICE: We finally got up to Yen-an on July 22, 1944, and that's all written up in Barrett's book. I don't see the point in going into it very much.

LEVENSON: Well, only to the extent of what you thought and felt. After all, it was a turning point in so many ways.

J. SERVICE: Yes, but I've reported on it so fully. You know, you've got my monograph and testimony at great length. I just hate to get too redundant. My impressions of Yen-an are all written down in my reports.

Part of the thing that dazzled us--dazzled us is too strong a word--was the difference in attitude in Yen-an. Chungking was simply waiting for the end of the war to come. Most of the people were from down river, and they were waiting so they could go back to their homes and their families in Shanghai or Nanking.

Here up in Yen-an--they had nothing, and they were poor as anything, off in the boondocks--the whole atmosphere was just full of confidence and enthusiasm. They were absolutely sure

[272]

J. SERVICE: that they were winning. As the Communists always say, the situation is excellent. Talk about your YMCA sort of spirit of optimism and so on, this was it to the nth degree. Everything is positive, everything is good, we're going to win, we are on the winning road.

We hadn't expected this. They obviously expected, as we got to talk to them more, expected to be very important in the post-war era, expected to share power, at least, with the Kuomintang. They were quite confident that, "The Kuomintang can never whip us, can never take away these territories."

Their whole attitude was a very different one. It was very much like my own feelings that I had found, new feelings, with my Chinese friends, of acceptance, of hospitality, of not being guarded, of not holding people off. Their liaison officers came and sat and joined our mess. People would drop in to see you. It was all very informal, as I say, like a sort of a Christian summer conference atmosphere. People were living fairly close together.

Mao Tse-tung might drop by for a chat in the evening, or Chu Teh, or we could go over and see them almost at any time or on very short notice. They had some telephones, very poor ones. But, you could call over to the headquarters and say, "Can I come on over?" "Sure." If you came, it might be a "Stay for lunch" sort of thing. It was all a very congenial, friendly, frank sort of an atmosphere. Of course, there were things they didn't tell us, but we didn't know what they were. [laughter]

LEVENSON: You used the word, "dazzled" and then somewhat backed off from it.

J. SERVICE: Yes.

LEVENSON: There have been a couple of types of criticism made of you. One was that you went "native." The other that you were seduced or converted or what have you by the Chinese Communists.

J. SERVICE: Yes. Well, we tried very hard, I think, to avoid that. We didn't draw our conclusions immediately. We tried to wait a time until people had traveled in the areas and gotten out and seen what the guerrillas were doing and what things were like.

But the confidence that we ran into, the difference in the morale, esprit, this was something that hit us right away. The ways things got done. If you asked for things, yes, they said they'd do it, and it was done, promptly, in fact, efficiently. In Chungking nothing was efficient. Nothing seemed to work and everything took a long time.

[273]

J. SERVICE: If we wanted to talk to Japanese prisoners, "Oh yes, we've got a lot of them down the road. You're welcome." In Chungking it was the hardest thing in the world to get ahold of any real Japanese prisoners. But, almost anything--"Newspapers, yes, we can get them for you." Pretty soon we started getting newspapers from Peking and other occupied cities in a very surprisingly short time.

All sorts of things. For instance, they had been publishing a paper all through the war up in Yen-an, a party paper; I asked Chou En-lai whether I could possibly get a set of back copies. "Certainly!" A couple of days later bales of papers arrived: he sent them up. Almost anything--They were very outgoing--cooperative.

We had a very elaborate briefing when we first got there. We told them: "We're not in a position to negotiate. We're not in a position to promise. We're here to observe. We want to find out all we can about you, what you've been doing, what the war has been like, what you think of it." So, they arranged a very extensive series of briefings.

Chinese don't seem to mind any length of talk or briefings. Each day we'd have another Communist leader come and spend the whole day more or less briefing us. Sometimes it was two days. Chu Teh,

Yeh Chien-ying, all the top military people, P'eng Teh-huai, Lin Piao, and then people from the various areas. A lot of them were already in Yen-an.

They were talking about having their seventh party congress, apparently waiting for the opportune time. A lot of people had come in from outlying places. It might take them a month or two months to get there. So, they were already in Yen-an waiting. A lot of these people gave us briefings. I took heavy notes on all this. Then I was interviewing people, going talking to people.

Mao said at one of the very early meetings, "I suppose you want to see me," you know, with a smile on his face. I said, "Why yes, certainly I do." But, he said, "I want to see you also, but I think maybe it's better if we wait till we get acquainted a bit, you see more about us, know more about us, and then our talk will be more useful."

Just a month later I got word, "Could I see the chairman the next day at two thirty" or something. I think it was two o'clock. I said, "Of course, I can." The talk was one that lasted from two till ten at night.

[274]

J. SERVICE: I had notes on all these things, but when I came back from Japan in '50 for the McCarthy hearings, why--Caroline, I think, had always felt that these notebooks were bad things to have around--she threw them all overboard.

LEVENSON: What, all your notes from the Yen-an period? [pause] Good place to stop?

J. SERVICE: Yes, I suppose. It's twelve o'clock.

Chungking-Yen-an Contrasts

[Interview 9: October 3, 1977]

J. SERVICE: I thought we'd now go back to Yen-an where we were last time. You asked me something about attitudes, impressions of Yen-an. I think that one thing that you have to remember, of course, is we went to Yen-an--and I'm speaking particularly of myself-- from the background of Chungking.

I'd been in Chungking a long time, maybe too long. Maybe I'd lost my perspective a little bit. Chungking was discouraging, a gloomy place to be. People were waiting for the end of the war, or they were trying to do as little as possible in prosecuting the war. There was rampant inflation with all the suffering and dissatisfaction, complaining, that that caused. Rampant inflation with nothing really being done to check it. There was no rationing, things like that. Wealthy people did not get conscripted. Young people stayed in universities all through the war, because university students were not subject to military service.

You had all sorts of things like this. The attitude of the Chinese officials, generally, that you met was rather resentful. They had a feeling that you were critical of them. There was beginning to be criticism of China at this time in the American press. So they were rather on guard, rather prickly. They felt that we weren't giving them very much, we weren't doing what we should for China. So most of our official relations in Chungking

were uncomfortable, uneasy.

[275]

A Diversion: Tai Li's Bunch of Ringers

J. SERVICE: They were particularly suspicious of me. The fact that one could speak Chinese, read Chinese, was something that made them suspicious. When Tai Li made his agreement with the navy, with SACO--Sino-American Cooperation Organization under "Mary" Miles--one of the stipulations was there would be no people who knew Chinese. They didn't want anybody who spoke Chinese.

LEVENSON: Why was this agreed to?

J. SERVICE: Simply because it was an incredibly absurd, foolish enterprise. There isn't any logical reason why such a thing should be agreed upon, except that it was just a crazy setup from the very beginning. There is no logical explanation.

One man got in by mistake. I hate to get diverted here, but this was a fellow named Banks Holcombe who was a Japan language officer. The navy sent him to Japan. He was a Marine officer. He studied Japanese.

"Mary" Miles outfit started trying to do some code breaking. So they needed somebody who knew Japanese.

The wheels ground around, and they turned up this guy who was a Japan language officer. He was sent off to join "Mary" Miles' cryptographic outfit.

It turned out that Banks Holcombe had grown up in China, because his father was a Marine general, General Holcombe, who was sent out to command a Marine contingent in 1927, when we expected trouble in China.

So, Banks had gone to school in Peking and knew Chinese very well. At any rate, one big function of the "Mary" Miles outfit was to train guerrillas. You'd bring in a bunch of guerrillas and give them the course, teach them demolition, various other hot shot stuff.

Then, at graduation "Mary" Miles himself would present each one with a graduation kit, meaning a carbine, a 45 pistol, various things like this, a bunch of goodies, and some plastic explosives. They went forth, presumably, as well-equipped guerrillas.

Because Banks had been in China, Chinese all didn't look alike to him. He got acquainted with Chinese and would talk to them. He was at one of these graduation exercises, and he realized that there were a couple of people there that he knew.

[276]

J. SERVICE: So, he went up and spoke to these guys afterward. "Didn't I see you here last course?" The man laughed in an embarrassed way and admitted the truth. What Tai Li was doing was to use a bunch of ringers. He was just running them through the course. [laughter] They got better and better

each time presumably.

They got Banks Holcombe out of there. He was shipped out immediately.

LEVENSON: What, Tai Li reported --

J. SERVICE: Oh yes. Yes. The Chinese caught on to the fact that he was a little too smart. So, he was moved up and out.

High Levels of Information and Conversation in Yen-an

J. SERVICE: Well, that got me diverted. Anyway, I was talking about the Kuomintang attitudes. We got to Yen-an and, of course, we were welcomed. They had been isolated, blockaded. They had already gotten some press people up there just before we got there.

Just going there was a form of American recognition, and this was tremendously important and very welcome. We were treated with open arms and red carpet treatment. The fact that Barrett could speak Chinese and I could speak Chinese, the fact that we had, I think, six people in our group who had spent time in China, who knew some Chinese, which was a very high proportion --

LEVENSON: Out of what, fourteen?

J. SERVICE: Out of sixteen I think it was. There were quite a bunch of us that had been in China teaching, or had grown up in China.

So that there was immediately a very warm, cordial atmosphere. They were interested in what was happening in the outside world. They'd been completely isolated. They wanted to talk to us. They asked us all sorts of questions.

LEVENSON: This was one of the questions on an agenda I haven't given to you. How much did they know about the progress of the war, and how good was their way of evaluating the information they got, because their frame of reference must have been so antiquated by then?

[277]

J. SERVICE: They were quite well informed actually as far as the news reports went, because they listened to radio news, they got newspapers from free China, and they got newspapers from occupied China. They got Japanese publications. They had very little in the way of foreign publications. They were very eager to get anything that we could get them. We got *Time* and *Life* and things like that, that were very late of course by the time we got them. But this sort of stuff they were very happy to get.

They tended to follow the Russian line, although they didn't completely on the war because they'd been attacked themselves. In other words, they didn't buy the "phony war" line completely in the '39 to '41 period. They paid lip service to it: it was an imperialistic war. But, they were anxious for the war to reach China. [laughter]

I would say that under the circumstances they were quite realistic. In some ways they had a fairly

good understanding of the United States. They realized the effect of the political campaign coming on in the fall of '44, that this was not a time for Roosevelt to make commitments. They said, "We realize this. We'll wait till after the campaign is over." After the campaign was over they wrote to Roosevelt and congratulated him. Roosevelt wrote back. It was quite a cordial letter.

They were astounded at Truman's nomination, but then so were we all. I mean we were dumbfounded when it came over the news that the Democratic convention had nominated Truman as vice-president.

We were having dinner that night with the leaders over at the army headquarters. There were two tables, as I recall, at least two tables. Generally, I was regarded as the civilian leader and Barrett as the military leader. I was generally put at the table or place of honor with Mao Tse-tung, and Chu Teh gave Barrett the honors.

I could sense that Mao was very impatient to get through with all the folderol about getting into our places and getting seated. So, as soon as we sat down he came out with it. [loudly] "Who is this Too-lu-mun? Who is Too-lu-mun?" Who is this man Truman? [laughter] Most of the dinner was devoted then to trying to explain how it was possible that someone completely unknown, or almost completely unknown, no great record of war or political service, could suddenly be chosen vice-president.

Wallace, of course, had been vice-president. Wallace had made a trip to China. Everyone assumed Wallace would be renamed. Chinese were worried that Wallace's visit to China had been what did him in, because it was during his visit that we got permission to go up to Yen-an.

[278]

J. SERVICE: They were concerned, what this meant, you know, about attitudes toward China, attitudes toward the Soviet Union. They could imagine all sorts of things into it, because they didn't have any comprehension of the domestic political situation in the United States.

Well, we didn't know too much about it either. So we were sort of helpless. It was an amusing incident. Obviously Mao had given a hard time to Chou En-lai, because they were quite relieved when they found we were about as confused as they were. [laughter]

This is sort of typical of the intellectual atmosphere. Most of them were intellectuals. Some were military men, but even most of the military men had had an intellectual period in their lives. Ch'en Yi, for instance, whom I got to know very well--did I mention before -- always referred to me sort of jokingly as his teacher's son, because he attended the YMCA school in Chengtu.

But they were not tied up with government administration because government and party were quite separate. There was a local government for the border areas. The party was quite separate. Of course, some people overlapped. But people like Mao and so on had no role in the local government.

You had a scattered group--sixteen or so--of these border areas behind the Japanese lines, far away, communications very poor. They had to be there on their own. A lot of these leaders had been called in to Yen-an in expectation of a party congress, which wasn't actually held until spring of '45. But, they were expecting it and waiting for the appropriate time. So, there were a lot of people in Yen-an without very much to do. They were just sitting there waiting, people like Ch'en Yi from the New

Fourth Army and a man from Shantung.

They were quite happy and delighted to sit and talk for hours and hours and hours. But, even people like Mao Tse-tung--As I said, my first interview with him was an eight hour interview with dinner. "Of course, you'll stay for supper" sort of thing, pot luck. Pot luck turned out to be just Mao and Chiang Ch'ing and the interpreter.

[279]

Dances, Fun, and Games in Yenan

J. SERVICE: I had forgotten completely about Chiang Ch'ing until later on when my reports became available. My notes were destroyed as I mentioned before. But, it wasn't until many years later that these reports were published in *Foreign Relations*. I was able to see that Chiang Ch'ing had been there.

LEVENSON: Any recollection now of her presence or her personality?

J. SERVICE: She was pleasant. . I remember more her dancing. We had these dances every Saturday night, which was a sort of a-- [pauses, then laughs] I don't know what's the right word--they were fun. Miserable conditions. Most of them were outdoors--it was the summertime and fall--on packed earth, under some pear trees, a pear orchard. A pickup orchestra would play one fox trot (an alleged fox trot), one waltz, and then one yang-ko, a local folk song. It was like a conga, sort of one, two, three, oomp; one, two, three, oomp sort of a thing. It wasn't only the dances, but there was a sort of a light heartedness about the place. I mentioned before the confidence, the morale, esprit.

We had been given some games by special services in Chungking, including a game of monopoly. Some of the Chinese who were attached to the liaison offices saw us playing monopoly. The next thing we knew they had gone away and manufactured a game of monopoly, but all based on Shanghai real estate! [laughter] These were all down-river people. It was Nanking Road and the Bund and the Park Hotel and Cathay and all the rest of the hotels. It was all based on Shanghai. [laughter] They just thought it was absolutely hilarious! Monopoly, by the way, is banned in the Soviet Union.

We had an accident with our plane when we landed, because the landing strip had been built over a graveyard and one wheel of the plane fell into a shallow grave. They decided to improve and extend the airfield. Everyone was contributing a day of labor, so I suggested to Barrett that we do the same since it was being built for our benefit. Barrett agreed.

We went out, but it turned out to be counterproductive in a sense because no one--there were several thousand people out there working--but none of them had ever seen any white men ever doing any work. So, everyone had to stop working and watch us! [laughter]

[280]

J. SERVICE: We played baseball. Barrett was insistent on having baseball, some exercise, some organized recreation. Usually in the afternoon before supper he liked to have a baseball game. There was enough to just get up two teams. I was a very poor baseball player. I never learned in my youth, so I couldn't catch a fly properly. I was always put out in right field, which was out among some

apple trees, so that there wasn't much hope of catching any flies anyway. I could only chase them.

There was the Japanese Peoples' Emancipation League. They didn't call them prisoners after they joined the emancipation league, which was being run by Okano, the leader of the Japanese Communist party, who now is called Nosako but used the name Okano at that time. Anyway, they put on an evening benefit for us.

Everybody put on benefits. We had all sorts of theatricals and musical shows. At one of the early ones, we were much embarrassed. It was just after our arrival. After their music, they said, "Now our American friends should sing." We didn't have any choir or chorus. We did some quick consultation and found that there were a few people who could do barber shop quartet or college glee club type singing.

The only song that they knew was "You Are My Sunshine." So, they sang "You Are My Sunshine." The next question was, "Translate! Translate!" Pretty silly when you tried to translate! [laughter] Might not be so bad, for the Cultural Revolution though, because "You Are My Sunshine" could apply to Mao Tse-tung, of course, in the Cultural Revolution.

Going back to the baseball game, we eventually had a baseball game with these Japanese prisoners, which was very amusingly written up by an OWI man, Adie Suesdorf, many years later, in the *New Yorker* magazine. I expect it was the only baseball game during the war between Americans and Japanese prisoners.

I mentioned we had a long series of briefings by all the military people and top leaders. After that I pretty much was on my own. I went to the briefings, of course. But, after that I went around talking to various people, meeting various people, making my own schedule.

Mao himself was very apt to say on some subject, "You want to talk about economic policy. Well, the man for you to see is Po Ku. Go talk to Po Ku." Or, I wanted to talk about party and party work in the occupied areas. "Well, the man to see on that is Liu Shao-ch'i." So, arrangement was made for me to go

[281]

J. SERVICE: to talk to Liu Shao-ch'i. As far as I know, I'm the only American that ever really had any lengthy talk with him. None of the newspaper people saw Liu Shao-ch'i at that time.

But, I talked to lots of people. I went to Lu Hsun Academy. I talked to some of the young intellectuals from Kuomintang China who had come into the Communist area and had been sent out to work in the villages. It's just exactly the same thing that's being done now. The thing was when these people came and wanted to volunteer, "Well, you've got to go out in the villages and stay for a year or two and prove that you can live with the villagers, work with the villagers, sort of prove yourself ." These people were pretty starry-eyed about it, a lot of them.

There was a nurse that I met at the dances who had been on the Long March. She was a very pleasant peasant girl really. She was a nurse at the international hospital. She seemed almost eagerly friendly and we used to go for walks occasionally. But, it had to stop there. Apart from a perhaps unusual personal caution, Barrett had set the rule, and we all agreed, that there should be no American-

Chinese Communist "relations."

LEVENSON: You were going to tell me more about the nurse whom you met.

J. SERVICE: The friendly, cheerful nurse in Yen-an who'd been on the Long March. There weren't very many women on the Long March.

LEVENSON: Briefly, the Long March--most people reading this will know--but that was--

J. SERVICE: I assume they will. It was the long trek from the Communist areas in southeast China, mainly Kansu province, all through southwest and west China, finally up to Shensi province. The main group that Mao and Chou En-lai were with started in October, 1934, and they finished up in Shensi province in October, '35. So, it was just about a year.

The nurse hadn't been in on most of the fighting. Most of the stories were all about the derring-do and the great exploits and crossing the rivers and things like that. But, one thing that she was still annoyed about was the discrimination against women when it came to the question of bathing, which was terribly important. They had no clothes except what was on their backs. They got very dirty and lousy and so on.

[282]

J. SERVICE: Chinese have no feeling about male nudity, but they're very prudish when it comes to female nudity. So, when they came to rivers and streams, why there was no problem. The men could just strip and bathe. But, because they didn't want to offend the lap pai hsing, the country people, the women weren't allowed to strip down and take baths. It was very difficult for them, and she still resented the difficulty of bathing along this Long March ten years later.

She also talked about the fact that they couldn't do very much for the wounded. If they had wounded, seriously wounded, more seriously wounded than able to walk, they simply had to leave them behind. They tried to find some peasants who would take them in.

But, it was apparently a sad business because the Kuomintang troops were following them all the time, chasing them, and if these people were found by the Kuomintang they would be killed. The expectation was they'd be killed. It was just a continual process of having to abandon their seriously wounded people. That's about all of that.

LEVENSON: We read now of people going to China and resenting the fact that the sort of personal intimacy that develops--and I'm not talking about sexual intimacy--that develops normally between people who spend some time together is not now possible. You know the sorts of books to which I'm referring. Was it possible then?

J. SERVICE: Oh, absolutely possible, completely possible. In fact this was it. We were experiencing it. I mentioned this in Chungking with my own group of close friends, and it was certainly true in Yen-an.

I think that there were some things that they would have been discreet about. Ch'en Chia-k'ang whose name I mentioned a couple times--he was a secretary for Chou En-lai--was quite frank even about

many of the party affairs, Wang Ming and the background of the rectification movement which was sort of tapering off when we got to Yen-an. We were really close friends, just as I would be close friends with an American. There were very few subjects that we couldn't discuss.

This was one of the reasons why we enjoyed Yen-an because we were able to make very close friends. Koji Ariyoshi, a Japanese Nisei who was with us, became very close friends with some people quite high up in the party.

[282a]

1. Yen-an, pagoda above caves. Airstrip to the left.
2. John S. Service taking notes during Yen-an briefing.
3. Helping to repair airstrip damaged by heavy American planes.
4. Left to right: Major E. T. Cowan, John S. Service, Mao Tse-tung, Yeh Chien-ying, Yen-an, 1944.
5. Left to right: Chou En-lai, Mao Tse-tung, and U.S. Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley. In Chungking for talks with Chiang Kai-shek, August 29, 1945.

[283]

J. SERVICE: I'm sure that others also found close contacts. It was an informal atmosphere and everything was possible at the time we were there. Later on things changed of course. It became obvious that we were not going to go ahead and give them anything, that Hurley was going to be rigid and insist on everything being done through Chiang Kai-shek and so on.

The man that was sent to replace Barrett was a military attaché whose reports, I mentioned, I used to have to deflate because he was willing to believe everything the Kuomintang said. He was an incredible choice to send up there.

And then after him Wedemeyer got a man who was a Russian expert because, "By God, we needed someone who knew the Communists." The only thing we knew was that he'd served in the Soviet Union. He predicted that the Soviet Russians weren't going to last--I may be exaggerating--more than ten days or something like that. I mean he was one of the extreme pessimists who said that the Russians can't possibly stop the Germans. So, he had to be taken out of the Soviet Union. He was sitting around in Washington and Wedemeyer wanted a Communist expert, so they sent him out to Yen-an.

LEVENSON: Why was a man like that appointed? Did it represent a relegation of China to a third-class position in terms of American policy?

J. SERVICE: By the time Yeaton was appointed--he was the Soviet expert--I think that the idea had really taken hold that they needed to get in a whole new crew. In other words, the idea became very fashionable that everyone who had served in China had preconceived ideas, had prejudices, and what was needed was a whole new crew.

In the McCarthy period the theme was: "Where there's smoke, there must be fire." During the Hurley period it was: "Anybody who has served in China already has preconceived ideas." You had to get fresh minds, fresh attitudes.

I think Wedemeyer was quite willing to buy this. I think by this time he was tired of squabbling. So, "Let's get in somebody who's a Communist expert." Everyone assumed -- Hurley and I'm sure Wedemeyer too and even apparently Roosevelt--that the Chinese Communists after all would do what the Russians told them to do.

[284]

Evaluation of the Dixie Mission Team

LEVENSON: Perhaps this is a good point to ask you your evaluation of the rest of the original Dixie Mission team. You had Barrett as leader, and he wrote his own monograph. Does what he wrote jibe with what you recall his impressions to have been at the time, 1944? Did subsequent policy, subsequent historical developments, alter his views?

J. SERVICE: I didn't read his reports at the time, but --

LEVENSON: You must have talked.

J. SERVICE: I talked to him. He apologizes in his book, sort of apologizes for having been swept off his feet and not having realized the evils of Communism, this sort of thing. He protests a little too much and I think unnecessarily. But, certainly the fact that he does apologize indicates that he was supporting something different at the time, doesn't it?

The group on the whole was a good group. As I said, we had quite a number of people with some background in China. I think the people, the signal people, meteorological people, weather reporting people, air ground rescue, all these people were very competent.

The order of battle man was competent but inclined to go on his own. He tried to operate a bit independently of Barrett, and he had to be pulled in a couple of times. OSS had some people, demolition people, who were competent. The doctor was an excellent man, who had grown up in India. His parents were missionaries. He was a superb person. Ludden was there from the Twentieth Bomber Command.

The Twentieth Bomber Command sent up a colonel, a target man, and he didn't know anything about China at all. Considering that the observer mission was an army operation, it was, I thought, very good.

Most of the people were genuinely interested. We had good people. For instance, Ariyoshi who came up to work with the Japanese prisoners, psych warfare business and propaganda, was very good.

There was a certain amount of milling around and some people didn't know what to do and weren't very much engaged. A couple of them got into the habit of sitting around and

[285]

J. SERVICE: drinking. One man's marriage had just broken up. He obviously was not happy, but I don't think that we ought to dwell on that sort of thing.

Levenson : No.

J. SERVICE: Going back to the nurse, a very nice person, but one could not know whether there might also have been some sort of official connection. I mean she may have been working for whatever secret police the Communists had. I don't know. That's that.

American Journalists and Other Foreigners in Yen-an

J. SERVICE: When we got to Yen-an, there was a contingent of press people already there.

The Chinese gave permission in the spring of 1944 for the press to go up--they insisted they would have to stay for an extended period, for at least six weeks or two months, something like that.

People like Teddy White and Brooks Atkinson couldn't take the time. So, they got stringers to go. [Israel] Epstein went up for the *New York Times* I think. Gunther Stein, who was writing for the *Guardian* and I think for the *Monitor*, did go. Votaw went. He got some commissions from various papers. The minister of information wanted him in. Harrison Forman was a sort of a free lance, and he went.

When we got there these people had already been up there for six weeks at least. They had interviewed all the top people. They had collected a lot of information. They made all of this available to me immediately. As soon as I got there I had reams of material that had been collected by these people and that I was free to use. A lot of my early reports were just transmitting interviews with Gunther Stein and so on.

This is the sort of collaboration with the press I talked about earlier. When they first got word they could go, Gunther talked to me about what sort of things we were interested in, what I would recommend. So, I had a long conversation with Gunther. He was German originally, a German Jewish refugee. He was very methodical and very complete.

[286]

J. SERVICE: After I'd been in Yen-an for a while Ch'en Chia-k'ang, my friend, at some point said to me what a pest this guy Stein was. [laughter] They never could satisfy him. They never could get all the information he wanted. So, I broke down laughing. He said, "What are you laughing about?" So, I explained to him that I had connived with Stein, with Gunther. [laughter]

His book is the best on Yen-an--far more complete though not as exciting as Forman's book.

We began to get rescued [American] pilots that were brought in. Some of them had come down near Peking, way up in the northeast corner, and been brought down through the guerrilla areas all the way across north China.

We began to send out our own people on field trips.

I had already while in Chungking talked to various foreigners who had come through the Communist areas, people who'd gotten out of Peking, and some out of Shanghai even. People like the Bands and a man named Martel Hall. I had talked to them in Chungking at great length.

There were foreigners in Yen-an who had worked there for a long time. There was George Hatem, Ma Hai-teh. There was an Austrian doctor Hans Muller, a refugee who had gone to China and then moved up there.

There was Michael Lindsay (Lord Lindsay now), an instructor at Yen-ching University who just went out to the Western Hills at the time of Pearl Harbor and got in contact with guerrillas. You can see the Western Hills from Peking. He'd worked with the Communists, first in one of the areas closer to Peking and then at Yen-an, for a long time.

So, there was a group of people, certainly sympathetic to the Communists, but nonetheless people we could talk to very frankly and fully. So that we had a good many sources of information besides just being fed the line.

One day I was talking to Chou En-lai. He pulled out a slip of paper and said, "Do you know this person?" Written on it was: Ferry Shafer.

I said, "Why yes, I know Ferry Shafer very well.

He laughed. He said, "Well, we have him. He's down in the *lu-kuan*, an inn for caravans in one of the suburbs of town, and he heard you were here and said he knew you."

[287]

J. SERVICE: Shafer was a Hungarian, and thus considered a friendly alien in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. He was not interned in other words. On some excuse he had gotten as far as Taiyuan, which is up in Shansi province, traveling on Japanese-held railways. Then, in Taiyuan he had managed to skip out of town and get with the guerrillas. Of course, they were suspicious of him. He was an enemy alien as far as they were concerned.

He had close contacts with KMT people. He allowed a KMT radio to be set up in his house for a while in Shanghai. Why he decided to go up to the Communist area I don't know. They had him under what amounted to house arrest.

Chou told me where he was. I went around to see Ferry. He and a man named Sandor had been prisoners in the Austro-Hungarian army in World War I. After being taken prisoners by the Russians, the revolution came. The camps were opened. They just took off. The easiest way to go was east, so they worked themselves all the way across Siberia-- there were lots of prisoners that did this and finally got to China.

Ferry had training as an architect, draftsman, and engineer. He had gone up to Chungking to survey the highway from Chungking to Chengtu, and Sandor had gone up to open a branch for the American Oriental Bank in Shanghai. They'd been in Chungking when my parents were there and had become very close friends of my parents. Then later when I worked in Shanghai as an architect's draftsman in the YMCA building bureau, Ferry had been my tutor.

Anyway, I told Chou En-lai that I thought he was okay. The next time a plane came to Yen-an, we gave him a ride down to Chungking.

Later on I got down to Chungking myself and got in touch with him and found out that he was selling all his reminiscences to the Catholics. Catholics were paying. He had no money, so he [chuckling] had become a sort of an informer for the Catholics. I got him some money and told him to get the hell out of there and get to the States, which he did. [laughter]

Daily Life: No Inflation Woes

J. SERVICE: One thing that struck you in Yen-an was that inflation had been taken care of because taxes and salaries and almost anything else were in kind. Everybody was paid in barley or millet, Yen-an was not heavily populated. There was lots of free land

[288]

J. SERVICE: around, so everybody started gardens. Most everybody had some sort of a victory garden. It was not crowded. By contrast, in a city like Chungking there was not a blade of grass or a tree.

The army for instance, took over an abandoned area. There had been depopulation in this area, famine, earthquake, civil war, bandits, and so on. The area had been quite substantially depopulated and there was plenty of vacant land.

This brigade, which was the garrison for the Yen-an area, then developed it, planted fields, and was self-supporting practically.

This was true of almost everybody. They were at least partially self-supporting. Even Mao himself had his own garden.

LEVENSON: What were the domestic arrangements? Who did the cooking?

J. SERVICE: In Yen-an they set up a mess hall. They provided the food. It was simple food.

I think we policed our own quarters. I don't recall anybody doing that. Whether they swept out for us or not I don't know.

LEVENSON: Did the Chinese eat communally?

J. SERVICE: Most of the people did. There were several different living complexes, and I think most people ate in a sort of dining hall. But, as I recall, when I would go and see somebody like Chou En-lai, he had a choice. Of course, Chou was one of the top leaders. He could have food brought up to his cave from the joint mess hall which was down below in a building. Or sometimes we went down and ate down there.

It was like a cafeteria. You just went down and filled up a table. Then they would bring the dishes--three or four dishes--quite simple food, plenty of it. Up in north China it was mostly a lot of noodles and steamed bread (mantou) and that sort of stuff.

They gave the observer group semi-foreign food, as I recall. Also we brought along some things of our own. We had our own coffee and sugar (because they had very little sugar--sugar was very scarce) and powdered milk.

Barrett mentions in his book we wanted to pay for the food, and they didn't want us to. I don't know whether that continued all the way through, but in the early days we were treated as their guests.

[289]

LEVENSON: How did they manage about non-indigenous supplies like gasoline for example?

J. SERVICE: They had no cars, or practically none. They had one truck and an old ambulance that had been sent to them. There was an old oil well that had been put down by Standard Oil, New York, about 1916. There were some oil seepages in the northern part of Shensi province. The oil company decided it wasn't worth developing, and so they had just gone away and left it. They got a little bit from this, a few barrels a day.

One of these military attaché reports that I had to puncture was an elaborate story that was put out by the KMT that the Communists had made an agreement with the Japanese to supply some enormous quantity of gasoline from the oil wells in north Shensi. It was preposterous, because to transport the quantities that they were talking about you'd need roads, you'd need an enormous number of trucks, and you'd need a whole distribution system. You'd need some way of getting the stuff across the Yellow River, because the Japanese were on one side and the oil wells on the other side.

I said, "These things don't exist but you can check by sending an airplane. It's easy enough to find out. These quantities of oil could not be gotten out of the wells, refined, and transported without a big network."

They got along with very little imported stuff. That's why sugar, for instance, was very scarce, why rice was hard to get. They raised some rice at this new development that the army had done. But by and large, rice was scarce.

Cloth was a great problem. They'd had a self-sufficiency campaign to meet the effects of blockade.

Fortunately, they had salt. When they were in Kansu, one of the problems that really whipped them was that they had no salt.

But they produced salt and the Kuomintang areas this time needed salt. So this gave them some smuggling wherewithal, shall we say.

There was some trade with the Japanese-occupied areas. They didn't apologize for it. But there were no luxury goods. What struck you in the Kuomintang areas was that luxury goods could come in. Anything could come in. There was no restriction. But you had no luxuries on the markets in Yenan.

[290]

J. SERVICE: There were some cigarettes that were bought, towels, combs, and mirrors, things like that you would get. I don't think they could make something like an enamel cup, for instance. They

could beat something out of tin, but even tin was probably in short supply.

Anything else?

Prisoners of War

LEVENSON: Yes. The Japanese prisoners, how sophisticated do you think their interrogation was?

J. SERVICE: I don't think I ought to spend much time on this sort of thing because it was not a subject I went into very much, and it's been written up pretty well elsewhere.

They were very anxious to take prisoners for propaganda reasons. There was, as far as we could find out, no brutality at all. They had some Japanese Communists with them, Nosako and another man. Most of them were peasants, not very highly educated, common soldiers. They were treated well. They were even allowed to go back if they wanted to, after a certain time. But very few of them went back because they were afraid what would happen to them if they went back.

They were used to make propaganda, write propaganda material. It was an interesting sort of experience, but it required a lot of time, a lot of expenditure of effort. On the whole, they didn't take a great many prisoners. They had--I forget--two hundred and some in and around Yen-an, which was a lot more than the Kuomintang apparently had taken all during the war. As I mentioned before [chuckling] we found it very hard to find any live ones at all.

There was constant indoctrination of their troops, to take prisoners, not to kill them. This was one of their propaganda things. "We will not harm you. We will not kill you. You will be well treated."

They did the same thing with the Kuomintang. This was an old tactic they'd used in the civil war against the Kuomintang. It was very successful in winning over a lot of the Kuomintang units that were fighting against them. "Don't fight us, join us. If you don't want to join us, here's some money and you

[291]

J. SERVICE: can go back home." So it was nothing new. It was one that they had tried out. It was a little different situation, against a foreign enemy instead of a civil war.

Stilwell Recalled

J. SERVICE: We were fairly cut off in Yen-an ourselves. We got old magazines, and we could hear the radio news, bulletins, if our man had time to take it down, which wasn't always. We had a little putt-putt engine, a tiny little gasoline powered generator.

We knew about Hurley's coming. The Chinese Communists wrote Hurley a letter inviting him to come up since we'd been told he was to solve the problems of China, or at least his own publicity gave that impression. They invited him up. We got no answer, and the Chinese got quite impatient after he'd been in Chungking for about a month and they hadn't heard from him.

Then on the tenth, I think it was, of October, the ninth or tenth, the plane came in. Planes came in

sometimes once a week, sometimes every two weeks, whenever the plane was available. The plane came in and brought a man named Colonel [E.J.] McNally, who had been a language officer in Peking when we were in Peking. Later on I'd seen him in Chungking. He'd been transferred with the language students to Chengtu.

McNally had been assigned to Hurley as an aide, military aide, and he came up to Yen-an to see old friends, see Dave and so on. It became quite a popular thing to do. When there was a plane, and there was any space on it, if someone had enough strings to pull, he could get himself a ride up to Yen-an. The plane usually stayed over the night and went back the next day. So we got a lot of these visitors. Eventually we got newspaper people coming up. Brooks Atkinson, Teddy White, and all these people eventually did get to Yen-an for short visits.

McNally came up. We said, "What's the news? What's going on?" He told us, to our amazement, that the real argument, the only thing they were talking about in Chungking, was not about how to get Stilwell his Chinese command, but whether or not Stilwell's job could be saved. The Kuomintang were trying to get him fired.

[292]

J. SERVICE: We had a big venting of feelings [chuckle] and I wrote that famous memorandum of October 10 that caused so much hullabaloo later on (Esherick, *op. cit.* pp. 161-166.) But, I wasn't saying anything that hadn't been said by many other people, by Stilwell, by Davies, and by other people. In other words, that Chiang Kai-shek is not China, and we should not limit ourselves to talking to Chiang Kai-shek.

At any rate, Stilwell was recalled about a week after that. Davies decided to come up to Yen-an. He hadn't been in Yen-an up to this point. It was his idea that I go back to the United States with Stilwell--simultaneously but not on the same plane. John felt that since I had been up in Yen-an and since there would undoubtedly be talks about China policy, what to do about China, that it would be useful to have me in Washington. Davies assumed that Stilwell's going back would provoke some policy discussions.

Actually, it was a mistaken idea. The decision had been made and by the time Stilwell got to the States, his mouth was sealed. He couldn't say a thing. He wasn't allowed to talk. So, the policy issues were pretty much fixed. Wedemeyer had been put in command. The theater had been split. But Davies couldn't foresee this.

Service Sent to Washington

J. SERVICE: Anyway, Davies got me orders. I jumped out of Yen-an very quickly. One night with Davies, and I left on the plane the next morning with my big map, rushed through Chungking, one night in Chungking. I had number one priority. [sticks thumb up]

Gauss told me about his having suggested, and then been encouraged and approved by the Department, to suggest a War Cabinet, which was a form of coalition government. This really is all described much more in my *Amerasia Papers* monograph.

Then he told me that he was going to resign. He expected to actually send in the resignation just after

the election. After every presidential election each serving ambassador sends in a pro forma resignation. He wanted me to tell the Department

[293]

J. SERVICE: that his was not intended to be pro forma, that he really meant that he wanted out. He'd had enough. I was to tell this to the highest person I had a chance to talk to in the Department.

Then I called Hurley, and Hurley said he wanted very much to talk to me. That again is mentioned other places. It was not much of a conversation because Hurley simply held forth and kept saying that he was going to get the Communists arms, he knew what they wanted, he knew all about them, and so on.

LEVENSON: What was your impression of him at that time?

J. SERVICE: A blowhard. A man that you can't talk to, that can't, wouldn't listen, and won't talk to a man who's been on the spot and knows something, [loudly, paraphrasing Hurley] "All you people seem to think I'm an ignoramus, that I've never had any experience. [with mock bombast] I've done a lot of negotiating. I've brought parties together. I did this in Mexico." He solved the Sinclair Oil claims against the Mexican government after expropriation. "I'm not a child," he said, shouting loudly.

I found that Brooks Atkinson was on the same plane. Just before Stilwell left he had called in a few correspondents that he knew particularly well and had confidence in, Teddy White and Brooks Atkinson, a guy named Daryl Berrigan who died later on in Thailand, years afterwards. He let them read the telegram log book with the messages to and from Washington leading up to his recall.

Brooks decided that the only way to get the story out would be to come to the States. So he got orders and got priority, but not as high as mine. We were flying across North Africa and were stuck in Algiers. Brooks pulled out his story and asked me to take it on to the States, which I did.

I landed in New York (we flew the Azores to New York that time). It was late at night. I went around to the *New York Times* and asked to see the chief foreign news editor who was on duty. I told him what I had, and said that he had to get it cleared which, of course, he agreed with.

It was Brooks' big exposé on the Stilwell recall. It was quite a blast. They held it up until Brooks got to the country. He got to the country about two days later, and then they let it be released. They published it as he wrote it, and it caused a terrific sensation.

[294]

J. SERVICE: It was the first real story on the Stilwell recall, and hit the idea of appeasing a corrupt regime. It was written from the Stilwell point of view.

Kuomintang Reaction: Stilwell's Advisers Blamed for Bad Publicity

J. SERVICE: The Chinese were, I think, startled. Of course, *Time* magazine came out with its own

version later on. It took them a little time, but they got [Walter] Judd on it and he contributed largely.

Actually, Teddy White had asked me to talk to Luce. So, Luce invited me up to New York. I had lunch with Luce at some club there on Fifth Avenue, I guess it was, or Madison. I made no effect on Luce at all. He went ahead and published what the Chinese said and what Judd said.

The interesting thing as far as my own future is that the *Times* story made such a repercussion--other people picked it up--that the Chinese, I think, were in a quandary about what to do. American reaction to an American general being recalled to appease a foreign dictator was rather bad.

The decision was made to blame it on his advisers. Almost simultaneously all over the world, wherever there was a Chinese embassy or bureau of the Central News Agency, or press officer, the same story popped out that Stilwell was a fine person, the Generalissimo had the highest regard for him, he'd tried to give him China's highest decoration--which Stilwell refused--before he left, but that Stilwell had been misled by these young pro-Communist advisers, Davies and Service. This popped up everywhere.

This has become a sort of a litmus test. Any writer that uses this, you know exactly where it came from. This man Brian Crozier, who's just written a silly book (1976) on Chiang Kai-shek, he buys this hook, line, and sinker. [Dr. Anthony] Kubek buys it hook, line, and sinker. Archbishop Paul Yu-pin who was in the States at about this time--later on he became a cardinal--he had a whole series of interviews about how I'd gone three times to Stilwell and forced Stilwell to do this and that.

Of course, to anyone who knew Stilwell, it's laughable. Stilwell was a man of very strong mind, and he'd been in China since I was a kid. The idea that Stilwell, who I only saw three or four times altogether, was being led around by the nose by these young advisers, is for the birds.

[295]

J. SERVICE: But anyway, this was the Kuomintang solution of the Stilwell problem, was that it was these young advisers misinforming Stilwell.

LEVENSON: So, you were already named around the world, what, early in '45?

J. SERVICE: Actually, this was early November, 1944

When I was arrested in June, '45, I found out, I heard from some people that--this was wife gossip--that some wife of a Chinese embassy official had said--this was two months before I was arrested--"Well, Service is going to be in very serious trouble." The Chinese were looking for easier targets than Stilwell [laughter] to get mad about.

Political Reporting, Intelligence, and Policy Formation; A Summation

LEVENSON: You were going to speak about intelligence, reporting.

J. SERVICE: Political reporting is what the State Department people like to call it. It's, of course, a form of intelligence. I'm always, probably, in most people's minds, thought of as being a political reporter, although really these four years from '41 to '45 were the only time when I was doing it full

time. The rest of my career has been mostly administrative and various other things.

I think political reporting is much like being a newspaper correspondent. The first requirement is to know what is news. A lot of people don't recognize news. They don't have a sense for news. They're not interested. You're got to not only be interested but have enough of a grasp of the whole picture so that you know how things fit in, what belongs, what may be relevant, what's pertinent, what's important.

You've got to be able to develop contacts, useful contacts, broad contacts. Your intelligence is as good as your contacts usually, so that if you're limited in your contacts and sources, your news is going to be limited. Your people have to be in positions where they really know what's going on, know information. The more strategically located, of course, the better. The broader your contacts the better.

You've also got to be able to get them to talk to you. This can be for various reasons. It can be purely on a friendship basis. It can be on a give-and-take, cooperative basis, as your

[296]

J. SERVICE: relations often are with newspaper people, as I mentioned. It can be because they think you're sympathetic to their cause or because they want you to get certain information. They may be trying to plant news or to influence you. Or you may be in a position, as I was in Chungking, working for the army, where people were interested in talking to me.

You've got to be able, of course, to listen. By that I mean not impose your own views. So many people have their own views so strongly that whatever they hear gets sieved through their own views, and only a distortion comes out. You've got to be able to listen, as I say, and you've got to be able to observe. Not everything comes through the ear. Some things come through what you see, very often.

Then finally, you've just simply got to be able to report it accurately, promptly. A lot of people sit on information, don't get it in. You've got to be able to write it in a way that gets attention. There have been a lot of people in the State Department that I've known that are famous for their inability to write or to write well--turgid, obscure, long- winded.

Usually to be a good reporter you've got to be willing to draw some conclusions. The guy that's reading your stuff at the other end, he's got a pile of stuff and he not only wants you to highlight what you want to say, give him a summary at the beginning, this sort of thing, but he also wants to be able to draw the conclusions from your own report. That's about it.

Obviously, this sort of thing that I'm talking about can't always be done effectively by the usual diplomatic officer. He's got family responsibilities. He's tied up in diplomatic routine, diplomatic entertaining, office routine, tied to an office. He isn't free to get out and develop these contacts. Also his contacts, because he's in the diplomatic establishment, are apt to be establishment contacts and other diplomats.

In some countries where there is a real democracy, like England for instance, you can have contacts with the opposition and it's perfectly all right. The less freedom there is in a country, the more autocratic, dictatorial, the government is, or perhaps the more revolutionary the country is, the more

you're limited if you're limited to the establishment. It's harder to get to what's really going on if you talk to just the people at the top, which is unfortunately what most political reporters in the Foreign Service do.

[297]

J. SERVICE: My situation was just the reverse of all these things. I had no family. I worked myself into a position where I wasn't tied to an office, had no routine, and I was able to develop contacts in the opposition within the Kuomintang and within the Communist party. So, I was able to exploit the situation to great advantage, which I think points to the desirability of the government having intelligence sources outside the diplomatic service.

A lot of the Foreign Service people, my old colleagues, tend to argue, "After all, we can do a perfectly good job of intelligence, it should be left to the diplomatic service." But, it can't be. It's obvious. There are situations when the Foreign Service officer, no matter how many cocktail parties he goes to, just can't do the kind of political reporting that I was able to do in China, or that very often is needed. As I say, the more unstable the country, the more revolutionary the situation, perhaps the more you need reporting outside the ordinary diplomatic framework.

LEVENSON: So, what would be your solution?

J. SERVICE: I think you have to have some sort of an intelligence service. But there again you still have another dilemma in a sense of getting too involved in the country. Here probably the answer is that your intelligence has got to be somewhat divorced from policy. And again it points to the idea of a separate intelligence service which is not involved in policy.

I was certainly a better intelligence officer in China than I was a policy person. It just happens, I think, that history has proved that my policy recommendations were generally right. But by the time I left, I had become very much involved in China in what was going on there, and in the policy options for America, so that it had probably compromised my impartiality.

It's difficult because part of your success as an intelligence officer almost necessitates involvement. If you're going to get close to people, you've got to have some sympathy for them, sympathy with them at least. But, if you get too close then you compromise your usefulness as a reporter, or you may compromise it, not necessarily. If you're an accurate reporter you may not.

LEVENSON: Were your reports read in the State Department and the Pentagon, as those of an advocate or, using current terms, a lobbyist for the Communists?

[298]

J. SERVICE: Eventually I was by some people. Not all people. The State Department, FE, did not. I think some of the people in some of the other agencies eventually came to an advocate.

A very good friend of mine, Marty Wilbur, who remained very pro-Kuomintang, I think even in those days spoke to me, expressed a feeling that I was becoming too much of an advocate. This was not

everyone's attitude. But it's a danger.

[GO TO Chapter IX](#)

[\[Top of the Page](#) | [Notices and Restrictions](#) | [Interview Transcript](#) | [Additional John S. Service Chapters](#)]
